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Taylor, Isaac

FANATICISM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
NATURAL HISTORY OF ENTHUSIASM.

—αἱ μετὰ πάθους διαστροφῆς
τῆς ψυχῆς χαλεπώτεραι.

A NEW EDITION; REVISED.

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TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE Preface to the first edition of this work contained the announcement of a plan which the author then hoped to complete, and which would have embraced the principal subjects connected with the perversions that have attached to Christianity in the course of its history. Of these subjects he has been able to treat one only—SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM.

In the interval that has elapsed since the publication of that work, the current of religious feeling—and of irreligious feeling too—throughout the civilized world, has taken a new turn; and the human mind, in its aspect toward Christianity, has entered upon a course tending toward the most momentous changes.

The probable issue of this movement will be anticipated by every one in accordance with his usual modes of thinking. Those whose convictions, as Christians, are firm and rationally founded, do not doubt what that issue will be; and the steadiness of their persuasion, in this respect,

inclines them—unduly perhaps, to await passively the short precursive triumph of the two great delusions which—apparently as antagonists, but really as coadjutors, are now so rapidly spreading through the world. Of these delusions, namely, PANTHEISM and POLYTHEISM—the former steals an advantage from the physical sciences:—the latter cloaks itself, as heretofore, under the guise of “Catholicity.”

It is the Author's belief that Christian men should now employ whatever influence they may possess, not so much in combating the portentous errors of the moment—which will soon reach their crisis, as in confirming the faith, and corroborating the religious sentiments of those who still adhere to—THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

STANFORD RIVERS,

January 16th, 1843.

PREFACE.

STRICT propriety seldom allows an author to obtrude upon the public the circumstances that may have attended and controlled his literary labours. Yet the rule may give way to special reasons ; and in the present instance the reader is requested to admit an exception.

More than twelve years ago the Author projected a work which should at one view exhibit the several principal forms of spurious or corrupted religion. But, discouraged by the magnitude and difficulty of such a task, he, after a while, yet not without reluctance, abandoned the undertaking. Nevertheless the subject continued to press upon his mind. At length he selected a single portion of the general theme, and adventured the volume entitled.—NATURAL HISTORY of ENTHUSIASM.

Emboldened to proceed, the Author almost immediately entered upon the nearly connected, and sequent subject which fills the present volume ; still fearing, however, lest, by an unskilful treatment of the arduous matters which it involves, he might create embarrassment, where most he desired to do good, he laid aside his materials.

But in the interval, by extending his researches concerning the rise and progress of the fatal errors that so early obscured our holy religion, the Author greatly enhanced his wish to achieve his first purpose. He therefore resumed FANATICISM ; which is now offered to the candour of the Reader.

1833.

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FANATICISM.



SECTION I.

MOTIVES OF THE WORK.

THE maladies of the mind are not to be healed, any more than those of the body, unless by a friendly hand. But it too often happens that these evils, difficult of cure as they are, fall under a treatment that is hostile and malign; or, what is worse, frivolous. Especially does this disadvantage attach to that peculiar class of mental disorders which, as they are more profound in their origin than any other, and more liable to aggravation, demand, in whoever would relieve them, not merely the requisite skill, but the purest intentions.

Vitiated religious sentiments have too much connexion, often, with the principles of our physical constitution to be effectively amended by methods that are simply theological; and yet, drawing their strength as they do from great truths with which the

physiologist ordinarily has little acquaintance, and which perhaps he holds in contempt, he is likely to err, as well in theory as in practice, when he takes them in hand. How exact soever may be his knowledge of human nature, whether as a matter of science, or as a matter of observation, the subject, in these instances, lies beyond his range: not himself religious, nor even superstitious, he has no sympathy with the deep movements of the soul in its relation to the Infinite and Invisible Being; he has no clew therefore to the secret he is in search of. The misapprehensions of the frigid philosopher are vastly increased if it should happen that, in reference to religion, his feelings are petulant and acrimonious.—Poor preparation truly, is it for a task of such peculiar difficulty, to be at once ignorant as to the chief article of the case; and himself influenced by a caustic levity of temper!

It would indeed be difficult to furnish a satisfactory reason for either the asperity or the levity with which persons of a certain class allow themselves to speak of the perversions of the religious sentiment; for if errors of this sort be regarded as corruptions of the most momentous of all principles, then surely a due affection for our fellow-men, on the one hand, and a proper reverence towards what is sacred on the other, demand, from reasonable persons, tenderness and awe, in approaching a subject so fraught with serious consequences! Even if religion were deemed by these sarcastic reprovers as an illusion, or a prejudice, infesting our luckless nature; not the more could rancour or levity be admitted by a wise and benevolent mind, seeing that these same powerful

sentiments, whether true or false, do so deeply affect the welfare of the human family.

But to look at the subject on another side, it may be asked, why the religious passions might not claim a measure of that lenity (if not indulgence) which is so readily afforded to other vices. If pride, abhorrent as it is, and if ambition—with both hands dyed in blood, and if the lust of wealth, making the weak its prey, and if sensual desires, devoid of pity, are all to be gently handled, and all in turn find patrons among Sages—why might not also Fanaticism? or why might not Enthusiasm? or why not Superstition? It would be hard to prove that the deluded religionist, even when virulent in an extreme degree, or when most absurd, is practically a more mischievous person than, for instance, the adulterous despoiler of domestic peace, or than the rapacious dealer in human souls and bodies! Let it be true that the Hypocrite is an odious being; but is not the Oppressor also detestable? And what has become of the philosophic impartiality of the supercilious Sage who will spend jovial hours at the table of the Cruel or the Debauched, while all he can bestow upon the victims of religious extravagance, is the bitterness of his contempt? There is a manifest inconsistency here of which those should be able to give a good account who, themselves, are far too wise, to be religious!

This difficulty we leave in the hands of those whom it may concern; and proceed to say, that emotions altogether strange to a sardonic temper must have come within the experience of whoever would truly comprehend the malady of the fanatic or the enthusiast; and much more so, if he be attempting

to restore the disordered spirit to soundness of health. Mere intellectualists know just so much of human nature as their own frivolous sentiments serve to give them ■ sense of ; but as to all that lies deeper than these slender feelings, or that stretches beyond this limited range, it is to them a riddle and a mockery. Yet it may happen that a mind natively sound, and now governed by the firmest principles, has, in an early stage of its course, so far yielded to the influence of these vehement sentiments as to give it ever after a sympathy, even with the most extreme cases of the same order ; so that, by the combined aid of personal experience and observation, the abyss wherein exorbitant religious ideas take their course may, by him, be explored ; nor merely explored, but its contents brought forth and described ; and this too in the spirit of humanity, or with the feeling of one who, far from affecting to look down upon the follies of his fellow-men, speaks in kindness of their errors, as being himself liable to every infirmity that besets the human heart and understanding.

Never, in fact, have we more need of a settled principle of philanthropy, than when we set foot upon the ground of religious delusions. No where, so much as there, is it necessary to be resolute in our good-will to man, and fixed in our respect for him too, even while the strictness of important principles is not relaxed. Far more easy is it to be contemptuously bland, than to be kind and firm on occasions of this sort. We have only to abandon our concern for serious truths, and then we may be indulgent to the worst enormities. But this is in every case a cruel charity, and a farce too ; and we

must seek a much surer foundation for that love which is to be the consort of knowledge.

A personal consciousness of the readiness with which even the most dangerous perversions of feeling recommend themselves to the human mind, and soon gain control over it, is needed to place us in the position we ought to occupy when such impulses are to be made the subject of animadversion. And if, with the light of Christianity full around us, and with the advantages of general intelligence, we yet cannot boast of having enjoyed an entire exemption from false religious emotions; what sentiment but pity should be harboured when we come to think of those who, born beneath a malignant star, have walked by no other light than the lurid glare of superstition? A check must even be put to those emotions of indignation with which we contemplate the hateful course of the spiritual despot and persecutor. Outlaw of humanity, and the offspring, as he seems, of infernals; he may, nevertheless, command a measure of indulgence, as the child of some false system which, by a slow accumulation of noxious qualities, has grown to be far more malign than its authors would have made it. Besides; there may revolve within the abyss of the human heart (as history compels us to admit) a world of inconsistencies; and especially so when religious infatuations come in to trouble it. How often has there been seen upon the stage of human affairs, beings—must we call them men? who, with hands sodden in blood—the blood of their brethren, have challenged to themselves the praise of a species of virtue and greatness of soul!

The very same spirit of kindness which should govern us in the performance of a task such as the one now in hand, must also furnish the necessary motive for the arduous undertaking. It is by no means as matter of curious description, or of entertainment, or even with the more worthy, though secondary purpose of philosophical inquiry, that we are to pass over the ground of religious extravagance. Any such intention would be found to lack impulse enough for the labour. There are however at hand motives of a higher order, and of greater force, having a peculiar urgency in reference to the present moment.

The minds of many are now intent upon the hope of the overthrow of old and waning superstitions, and of the universal spread of the Gospel. But the spread of the Gospel, as we are warranted to believe, implies and demands its separation from those false modes of feeling which heretofore, and so long, have embarrassed its course. Christianity must free itself from its entanglement with malignant passions, if it would break over its present boundaries. Is the world to be converted, and are the nations to be brought home to God? We believe it; but this supposes that the Christian body should awake from every illusion, and rid itself of every disgrace!

Lamentable indeed it is, that the families of man have remained, age after age, the victims of pernicious errors; yet this has not happened because there has not been somewhere extant, in every age, a repository of truth, and an INSTRUMENT, or means of instruction. If now superstition and impiety

share between them the empire of almost all the world, it is not because nothing better comes within the reach of the human mind ; or because nothing more benign is presented to its choice. Absolute Truth, truth from heaven, has long sojourned on earth, and is to be conversed with ! Why then do the people still sit in darkness ? The question may painfully perplex us, yet should never be dismissed until it be resolved. Rather a genuine compassion for our fellow-men will lead us to prosecute, with intense zeal, any inquiry which may issue in the purification of those means of salvation that are confided to our care. If the Gospel does not prevail, and run from land to land, the question recurs—what is it that arrests its progress ?

Besides employing ourselves then in all proper modes for propagating the faith, every one competent to the task, should institute a scrutiny—at home and abroad, in quest, as well of open hinderances to the progress of the Gospel, as of more latent or obscure causes of obstruction. The great work, in an age of Missions, should be the re-inauguration of Christianity among ourselves. If religion—religion we mean, not as found on parchments, or in creeds, but in the bosoms of men, were indeed what it should be, it would doubtless spread, as once it did, from heart to heart, and from city to city, and from shore to shore. The URGENT REASON, therefore, why we should now dismiss from our own bosoms every taint of superstition, and every residue of unbelief, as well as whatever is fanatical, factious, or uncharitable, is this—that the world, even the deluded millions of our brethren in all

lands, may at length receive the blessings of the Gospel.

Although we were looking no further than to the personal welfare of individuals, it would always seem in the highest degree desirable that whoever believes the Gospel should cast off infirmities of judgment, groundless suppositions, idle fears ; and especially that he should become free from the taint of malign sentiments. But after we have so thought of the individual, must we not give a renewed attention to the influence he may exert over others ? No one "liveth to himself." An efficacy, vital or mortal, emanates from the person of every professor of the Gospel. Every man calling himself a Christian, either saves or destroys those around him. Such is the rule of the dispensation under which we have to act. It pleases not the Divine Power to operate independently of a subordinate rational agency ; and to this rule even the scheme of human redemption was made to conform itself. The Saviour of men "became flesh, and dwelt among us," because no violence could be done, though on the most urgent of all occasions, to the established principles of the moral system. The harmony of the intellectual world, in the constitution of which the Divine Wisdom is so signally displayed, must not be disturbed, notwithstanding that the Eternal Majesty himself was coming to the rescue of the lost ; and in so illustrious an instance we have a proof, applicable to every imaginable case, and always sufficient to convince us—That the mercy of God to man moves only along the line of rational and moral agency ; that if a sinner is to be "converted from

the error of his way," it must be by the word or personal influence of one like himself. Other purposes being granted, it was to give sanction to this very mode of procedure, that He who was rich in the fulness of divine perfections, became poor, that we, through the poverty of his human nature, might be made rich. Vain is the supposition then, that God, who would not save the world at the cost of the settled maxims of his government, shall in single instances waive them; or put contempt upon that to which he attributed the highest importance on the most notable of all occasions!

Christianity, such as it actually exists in the bosoms of those who entertain it, is the Instrument of God's mercy to the world: and the Effect in every age will be as is the Instrument. In these times we have not lost sight of this great principle; much less do we deny it: and yet every day we give more attention to other truths, than to this. We honour the capital doctrine of the agency of the Spirit of Grace in the conversion of men; and then we turn to proximate means, and pay due regard to the ordinary instruments of instruction. And thus, having rendered homage, in just proportion, to the Divine Power and Sovereignty on the one hand, and to human industry on the other, we think too little of that middle truth which, nevertheless, to ourselves, is the most significant of the three, namely—That the moral and intelligent instrumentality from which the Sovereign Grace refuses to sever itself, is nothing else than the vital force which animates each single believer.

Does not the Omnipresent Spirit, rich in power to

renovate human hearts, even now brood over the populous plains and crowded cities of India and of China, as well as over the cities and plains of England? God—even our God, is he not locally present among the dense myriads that tread the precincts of idol worship? Doubtless he is ever, and in all places, at hand; and wherever at hand, able also to save. All this is true, but alas! the human instrumentality is not present in those dark places; and the immutable law of the spiritual world forbids that, apart from this system of means, the souls of men should be rescued.

Nor is the bare presence of the instrument of conversion enough; for its **POWER** resides in its **QUALITY**. The very same law—awful and inviolable, which demands its *presence*, demands also its *quality*, as the condition of its efficiency. Awful indeed and inviolable is this law;—awful, because inviolable; and awful to the Church, because it makes the salvation of mankind, in each successive generation, to lean with undivided stress, upon the faith and charity that are found in the hearts of the Christians of each age, severally and collectively!

There might seem more urgent need to make inquiry concerning the intrinsic condition of the Christian body in those times when its diffusive influence had sunk to the lowest point, or had quite failed, than when this influence was growing. And yet, inasmuch as hope is a motive incomparably more efficacious than depondency, we should be prompt to avail ourselves of its aid whenever it makes its auspicious appearance. But the present hour is an hour of hope; let us then seize the fair

occasion, and turn it to the utmost advantage. An age of expectation is the very time when vigilance and scrutiny, of every sort, should be put in movement, and should be directed inward upon the Church itself; for in the bosom of the Church rests the hope of the conversion of the world!

How culpable then, and how ignoble too, must we deem that spirit of jealousy or reluctance which would divert such a scrutiny, as if the honour of the Gospel were better secured by cloaking the faults of its adherents, than by labouring to dispel them! Shall we, as Christians, wish to creep under the shelter of a corrupt lenity? Shall we secretly wish that the time may never come, or not come while we live, when the inveterate errors of the religious body are to be fairly dealt with, and honestly spread to the light? Every one readily grants, that when the flagrant evils that abound in the world are to be denounced, and when open impiety is to be reproved, we should use a serious severity; but then, when we turn homeward, must we at once moderate our tones, and drop our voice; and ask a sort of indulgence, as the favourites of heaven, which we have been by no means forward to grant to the uninstructed and irreligious portion of mankind? Let not our thunders always have a distant aim. Alas! many generations of men have already lived and died untaught, while the Church has delicately smothered her failings, and has asked for an inobservant reverence from the profane world! True it is that the vices of heathens and infidels are grievous; but it is also true that the vices of the Church, if less flagrant, and less mischievous in their immediate operation, are loaded

with a peculiar aggravation, inasmuch as they impair the ONLY EXISTING MEANS for the repression and extermination of all error, and of all vice !

If then the alleged dependence of the religious welfare of mankind upon the energy and purity of the Christian body be real, it affords a full apology for whatever methods (even the most rigorous) may conduce to the cleansing or invigoration of that body. All we need take care of is the spirit and intention of our reproofs. Should there be any, calling himself a disciple of Christ, who will protest against such impartial proceedings ; he might properly be told that the inquiry in hand is too momentous, and too extensive in its consequences, to be either diverted or relinquished in deference to the feelings or interests of the parties immediately concerned. Be it so, one might say to the reluctant and faulty Christian, be it so, that your spiritual delinquencies are not of so fatal a kind as to put in danger your personal salvation (an assumption, by the way, always hazardous) and let it be granted that you are chargeable only with certain infirmities of judgment, or exuberances of temper or conduct ;—yet these faults in you, as a Christian, and especially at the present critical moment, exert a negative power, the circle of which none can measure. Can you then desire that a scrupulous tenderness should be exercised toward you, while pity towards the millions of mankind is forgotten ? Nay, rather, let every instrument of correction, even the most severe, be put in play, which may seem needful for restoring its proper force to the Gospel—the only means as it is of mercy to the world. No, we must not flinch, although the sen-

sitiveness and the vanity of those who think themselves the lights of the world were to be intensely hurt. Let all—all be humbled, if such humiliation be indeed a necessary process that shall facilitate the conversion of the nations.

Such then is the prime motive which should animate the difficult labour we have in hand. But there are other reasons, nor those very remote, that may properly be kept in view when it is attempted, as now, to lay bare the pernicious sentiments that have so often, and so severely afflicted mankind. If, just at the present moment, there seems little probability that sanguinary superstitions should regain their lost ascendancy, can we think it certain that no such evils, congruous as they are with the universal passions of man, shall henceforth be generated, and burst abroad? Manifest as it is that the human mind has a leaning toward cruel excesses in matters of religion, there can be no ground whence to derive a firm persuasion that this tendency shall, in all future ages, be held as much in check as now it is. The supposition that human nature has for ever discarded certain powerful emotions, which awhile ago raged within its circle, must be deemed frivolous and absurd. How soon may we be taught to estimate more wisely the forces we have to guard against in our political and religious speculations! The indifference and the levity we see around us is but the fashion of a day; and a day may see it exchanged for the wildest extravagance, and for the utmost frenzy of fanatical zeal. Human nature, let us be assured, is a more boisterous element than we

are apt to imagine, when it has happened to us for a length of time to stand upon the brink of the abyss in a summer season, idly gazing upon the rippled surface—gay in froth and sunbeams. What shall be the movements of the deep, and what the thunder of its rage, at nightfall, and when the winds are up!

Nothing less than the amplest testimony of history can support general conclusions as to what is probable or not, in the course of events. And yet even the events of the last half century might be enough to prove that mankind, notwithstanding the boasted advance of civilization, has not outgrown its propensity to indulge the vindictive passions. Or can we have looked abroad during our own era, and believe that impudent imposture shall no more boast its successes? Rather let it be assumed as always probable, that whatever intemperance, whatever atrocity, whatever folly, history lays to the charge of man, may be repeated, in this age, or in the next.

The security which some may presume upon, against the reappearance of religious excesses, if founded on the present diffusion of intellectual and Biblical light, is likely to prove fallacious in two respects. In the first place, the inference seems faulty because this spread of knowledge—in both kinds, although indeed wide and remarkable—or remarkable by comparison, is still in fact very limited; and bears an inconsiderable proportion to the broad surface of society, even in the most enlightened communities. If a certain number has reached that degree of intelligence which may be thought to exclude altogether the probability of violent movements, the dense masses of society have hitherto

scarcely been blessed by a ray of genuine illumination: moreover, there is in our own country, and in every country of Europe, a numerous middle class, whose progress in knowledge is of that sort which, while it fails to ensure moderation, renders the mind only so much the more susceptible of imaginative excitements. Torpor, it is true, has to some extent been dispelled from the European social system; but who shall say in what manner, or to what purposes, the returning powers of life are to be employed? In now looking upon the populace of the civilized world, such as the revolutionary movements of the last fifty years have made it, one might fancy to see a creature of gigantic proportions just rousing itself, after a long trance, and preparing to act among the living. But, what shall be its deeds, and what its temper? The most opposite expectations might be severally made to appear reasonable. Every thing favourable may be hoped for;—whatever is appalling may be feared. At least we may affirm that the belief entertained by some, that great agitations will not again produce great excesses; or that portentous delusions may not once more, even on the illuminated field of European affairs, draw after them, as in other ages, myriads of votaries, rests upon no solid grounds of experience or philosophy, and will be adopted only by those who judge of human nature from its transient aspects, or who think that the incidents of yesterday and to-day afford a sufficient sample of all Time.

But a persuasion of this sort, founded on the spread of intelligence, whether secular or religious, is liable to exception in another manner—namely,

by attributing to knowledge, of either kind, more influence than it is actually found to exert over the passions and imagination of the bulk of mankind. Education does indeed produce its proper effect to moderate the emotions, and it acts as a preservative against delusion, in cold and calculating spirits; and it exerts also, in a good degree, the same sort of salutary influence over even the most turbulent or susceptible minds, up to that critical moment when the ordinary counterpoise of reason is overborne, and when some paramount motive is gaining ascendancy. This sudden overthrow of restraining principles—an overthrow to which sanguine and imaginative temperaments are always liable, is not often duly allowed for when it is attempted to forecast the course of human affairs. We form our estimate of moral causes according to that rate of power at which we observe them now to be moving; but we fail to anticipate what they shall become, perhaps to-morrow, when the existing restraints of usage or of feeling have been burst asunder.

The rush of the passions, on such occasions, is impetuous, just in proportion to the force that may have been overthrown; and whatever has given way before the torrent, goes forward to swell the tide. There are those who, from their personal history, might confirm the truth that, when they have fallen, their fall was not softened, but aggravated, by whatever advantages they possessed of intelligence or sensibility. And it is true, that, when the balance of the mind has once been lost, the power of intelligence or of knowledge to enhance the vehemence of malignant emotions, or to exaggerate preposterous

conceits, is much greater on occasions of general excitement, or of public delusion, than in the instance of private and individual errors. Whence in fact does knowledge draw the chief part of its controlling force over the mind, but from the susceptibility it engenders to the opinions of those around us? In entering the commonwealth of intelligence we come under an influence that will probably out-measure any accession we may gain of personal power. It is only on particular occasions that we regulate our conduct, or repress the violence of passion, by self-derived inferences from what we know; while ordinarily, and almost unconsciously, we apply to our modes of action, and to our sentiments, those general maxims that float in the society of which we are members. If every man's personal intelligence governed his behaviour, the empire of knowledge would indeed be much more firm than it is; because truth would take effect at all points of the surface of society, instead of touching only a few. But this not being the fact, whatever blind impulse awakens the passions of mankind, affects all, individually, in a degree that bears little relation to the individual intelligence of each. The movements of a community when once excited, are far more passionate and much less rational, than an estimate of its average intelligence might lead us to expect.

If it be so, it must happen that when once a turn is made in the general tendency of men's feelings—when once a certain order of sentiment, or a certain course of conduct has come to be authenticated, if, for example, some dark, cruel, or profligate rule of policy be assented to as necessary or just, all men

in particular, in yielding themselves to the stream of affairs, will plunge into it with an impetuosity proportioned to their personal intelligence and energy of mind. Every man in adopting a general conclusion, because adopted by others, strengthens himself and others, in the common purpose, by all those means of knowledge, and powers of argument, which he possesses. If the error or extravagance be exclusively his own, the faculty and furniture of his mind are employed in defending himself from the assaults of other men's good sense ; and human nature does not often, under such circumstances, accumulate much force. But the same faculties moving forward with the multitude, on a broad triumphant road, swell and expand, and possess themselves of the full dominion of the soul.

In the present season of general indifference, the breaking forth of any species of fanaticism may seem improbable. We ought however to look beyond to-day and yesterday ; we should survey the general face of history, and should inspect too the depths of the human heart, and calculate the power of its stronger passions. Disbelief is the ephemeron of our times ; but disbelief, far from being natural to man, can never be more than a reaction that comes on, as a faintness, after a season of credulity and superstition. And how soon may a revulsion take place ! How soon, after the hour of exhaustion has gone by, may the pleasurable excitements of belief be eagerly courted !—courted by the vulgar in compliance with its relish of whatever is pungent and intense ;—courted by the noble as a means, or as a pretext of power ;—courted by the frivolous,

as a relief from lassitude ; and by the profound and thoughtful, as the proper element of minds of that order !

Whenever the turn of BELIEF shall come round (we are not here speaking of a genuine religious faith) empassioned sentiments, of all kinds, will follow without delay : nor can any thing less than a revival of Christianity in its fullest force then avail to ward off those excesses of fanaticism, and intolerance, and spiritual arrogance which heretofore have raged in the world. The connexion of CREDULITY with VIRULENCE is deep seated in the principles of human nature, and it should not be deemed impertinent or unseasonable at any time to attempt to trace to its origin this order of sentiments, or to sever the fibres of its strength :—unless indeed, we profess to think that man is no more what hitherto he has been.

SECTION II.

THE MEANING OF TERMS—RISE OF THE MALIGN EMOTIONS.

EVERY term, whether popular or scientific, that may be employed to designate the affections of the human mind, is more or less indeterminate, and liable to many improper extensions of the sense which a strict definition might assign to it. This disadvantage—the irremediable grievance of intellectual philosophy, has its origin in the obscurity of the subject; and is besides much aggravated by the changing fashions of speech, which neither observe scientific precision, nor are watched over with any care. Men speak—not as they think; but as they think and hear; and in what relates to things impalpable, few either think with precision, or hear attentively. All ethical phrases, and those terms which derive their sense from the principles of religion, besides partaking fully of the disparagement common to intellectual subjects, labour under a peculiar inconvenience that is not shared by any others of that class. For if men are merely inaccurate in their mode of employing the abstruse portion of language, they too often entertain, in what relates to religion, some capital error which

ordinarily possesses the force and activity of ■ virulent prejudice, and imparts to their modes of speaking, not indistinctness indeed, but the positive properties of a strong delusion.

It is not the small minority of persons who may be soundly informed in matters of religion, that give law to the language of a country ; or even if it were so, this class is not generally qualified, by habits or education, to authenticate a philosophical nomenclature. From these disadvantages it inevitably follows that when, by giving attention to facts, we have obtained precise notions on subjects of this sort, or at least have approximated to truth, it is found impracticable to adjust the result of our inquiries to the popular and established sense of any of the terms which may offer themselves to our choice. The mass of men, besides their backwardness always to exchange ■ vague, for ■ definite and restricted notion, do not fail to descry, in any definition that is at once philosophical and religious, some cause of offence. The new-sharpened phrase is felt to have an edge that wounds some prejudice, and the writer who is seen to be thus whetting afresh his words, is deemed to entertain a hostile purpose, and is met with a correspondent hostility.

If new terms are not to be created—a procedure always undesirable, and if the intolerable inconvenience of a ponderous periphrasis is also to be avoided, the best that can be done, amid so many difficulties, is to select a phrase which, more nearly than any other—of those commonly in use, conveys the notion we have obtained ; and then to append a caution against the misunderstandings to which the writer's meaning,

from the peculiar circumstances of the case, is exposed.

In the instance of every term connected with religious principles or modes of feeling, there must of course be admitted a wider departure from the etymological or ancient, than from the modern and popular sense they bear. If the recent and vulgar meaning of such phrases be incorrect, how much more so must be the remote. Whither does the *etymon* carry us, but to a foreign region of thought? In matters of religion revolutions have taken place, which, while they leave human nature the same, have imparted a new substance, a new form, and a new relative position, to every notion that respects Invisible Power, and human conduct.

Preposterous therefore would be the pedantry of a writer who, in discoursing, for example, of Superstition, or Enthusiasm, should confine himself to such a definition of those terms as might comport with the sense they bore, centuries ago, in the minds of Lucian, Plutarch, Epictetus, or Aristotle! Even many of the less fluctuating ethical abstractions have dropped almost the whole of their primeval significance in the course of ages, and have assumed another. Is *Justice*, in the sense of an Athenian populace, or in the sense of the Senate and People of Rome, the justice either of English law, or of English opinion? How much analogy has the *Virtue* of Sparta, with the virtue of Christian ethics? Where, in modern times, unless it be among the slave-holders of republican America—where shall we find a meaning of the word *Liberty* which has even a remote resemblance to the sense attached to

it by the ferocious lords of miserable Lacedæmonian helots?

The passions of man are permanent, but the difference between polytheism and true theology—how much soever true theology may in any instance have been encumbered or obscured, is so vast, as to leave nothing that belongs to the circle of religious emotion unchanged.

Thus it is that the FANATIC of the Grecian and Roman writers is hardly, if at all, to be recognised as the predecessor of the Fanatic of Christian times; and although, for purposes of illustration, we may hereafter glance at some of the ancient and obsolete forms of religious extravagance, it is with the modern species—practical inferences being our prime object, that we shall, in the following pages, chiefly be conversant.

In a former instance the author was not insensible of the disadvantage he laboured under in adopting a phrase—Enthusiasm, which perhaps more than any other—the one he has now to do with excepted, is employed in every imaginable diversity of meaning, and to which, in truth, every man assigns a sense that reflects his personal rate of feeling in matters of religion; one man's Enthusiasm, being only another man's Sobriety. Before such diversities can be harmonised, not only must mankind be taught to think with precision; but must come also to an agreement on the great principles of piety.

Discordances, still more extreme, belong to the popular senses of the word FANATICISM; for inasmuch as it takes up a more pungent element than the term Enthusiasm, it usually draws some special

emphasis from the virulence or the prejudices of the mouth whence it issues: the word is the favourite missile of that opprobrious contempt wherewith Irreligion defends itself in its uneasy position; and it is hurled, often, with the indiscriminate vehemence that belongs to fear. The sense attached to a term when so employed, must of course differ immensely from that which it bears in the mind of the dispassionate observer of mankind, and especially of one who takes up the truths of Christianity as the best and only certain clew to the philosophy of human nature.

Once for all then, the author requests the reader to remember that he does not profess to be either lexicographer or scholastic disputant; nor does he assume it as any part of his business to adjust the proprieties of language; but he aims rather, on a very important subject, to make himself understood, while he describes a certain class of pernicious sentiments, which have too often been combined with religious belief. In another volume spurious and imaginative religious emotions were spoken of: our present task is to describe the various combinations of THE SAME SPURIOUS PIETISM—with the MALIGN PASSIONS.

After rejecting from our account that opprobrious sense of the word Fanaticism which the virulent calumniator of religion and of the religious assigns to it, it will be found, as we believe, that the elementary idea attaching to the term in its manifold applications, is that of *fictitious fervour* in religion, rendered turbulent, morose, or rancorous, by a junction with some one or more of the malign

emotions. Or if a definition as brief as possible were demanded, we should say, that FANATICISM IS ENTHUSIASM, INFLAMED BY HATRED.

A glance at the rise of the irascible emotions may facilitate our future progress. Our subject being an instance of the combination of these emotions with other principles, it is well to have the elements whence they spring distinctly in view.

The difficulty that attends analysis in the science of mind, belongs in a peculiar manner to those instances in which we have to do with passions that scarcely ever present themselves otherwise than in an exaggerated and corrupted condition. It is usual, if an object of philosophic curiosity be obscure or evanescent, to single out for examination the most marked examples of the class. But to take this course in an analysis of the passions, is to seek for primitive elements where most they have lost their original form, and have suffered the most injury.

What the contour and symmetry of the moral form was, as it came from the hand of the Creator, may be more readily determined in the dry method of ethical definition, than vividly conceived of; and this is especially true of those emotions which imply the presence of evil. How delicate is the task—if indeed it be a practicable one, to trace the line between nature (in the best sense) and deformity—between the true and the false, in these instances! And yet, not the most rancorous of the malign sentiments can be thought any thing else than a disordered state of some power, indispensable to the

constitution of a rational and independent agent. We need then take care lest, in our haste to condemn what is evil, we should denounce as such that of which God himself is the author, and which, if we think closely, cannot even be conceived of as altogether wanting in ■ being placed where man is placed.

Within a certain line there can however be no difficulty in deciding between good and evil. It is quite obvious that a passion or appetite, subservient to some specific purpose, is in an irregular state when it either overpasses, or fails to secure that purpose : the end must give law to the means ; and where the end may clearly be defined, the limit which the means should reach is not hard to ascertain. Either by EXCESS and too great intensity ; or by PERVERSION, or misdirection from their proper object ; or by PROLONGATION from momentary impulses to habits and permanent qualities, as well the animal appetites as the irascible passions assume a pernicious form, and derange the harmony of nature.

Which of the emotions or desires it is that may justly claim to be not subservient, but paramount, and may therefore safely be prolonged, Nature distinctly informs us, by rendering such feelings always agreeable ; while uneasiness, or even positive pain, is attached to the continuance of every passion, which, in her intention, should only measure out a momentary occasion, and which ought to rise and disappear in the same hour.

It is thus, we need hardly say, with the bodily appetites, which disturb the system (as well corporeal as mental) whenever they do more than accomplish

their definite purpose. Indispensable as these impulses are to the machinery of life, they take a noxious quality when they are detained. Each, moreover, has its specific object, and throws every other function into disorder if it become fastidious : and each too must observe its due amount of force.

The same is true of all forms of the irascible emotions, which can never go beyond their purpose, and especially can never pass into dispositions, without vitiating the character. Every instance of excessive excitement contributes, shall we say, the whole amount of its excess to the formation of a habit of the same class ; and then these habits—emotions parted from their occasions, soon run into some sort of perversion. Unoccupied emotion attaches itself to whatever objects it may meet ; and it is thus that human nature subsides into its most corrupted states. A mode of feeling is generated, of the unreasonableness of which the mind is dimly conscious ; and to rid itself of the uneasy sense of being absurd, rushes on toward what is still more preposterous, and so surrounds itself with false impressions, and loses all recollection of truth. As there is an intoxication of the animal appetites, so is there an intoxication of the malign passions ; and perhaps if we could analyze some extreme instances of atrocious hatred—hatred constituting the fixed condition of the soul, we should find that the miserable subject of this passion has become what he is by a perpetual endeavour to drown self-reproach and inward contempt, in deeper and deeper draughts of the cup of poison.

The irascible passions can be allowed to have re-

spect to nothing beyond the preservation of life, or of its enjoyments, on those unforeseen occasions when no other means but an instantaneous exertion of more than the ordinary force, both of body and mind, and especially of the latter, could avail for the purpose of defence. Anger is the necessary safeguard of beings that are not housed, like the tortoise, within an impenetrable crust ; and if man had been cased in iron, or if he were an ethereal substance, he probably would not have been furnished with passionate resentments. Nevertheless every good purpose of such emotions has been answered when the faculties have received that kind of stimulus which the exigency of the moment demands ; and their continuance must be always (if it were nothing worse) a waste and perversion of power ; since the ends they have in view are more certainly secured by other means, when once the sudden peril is gone by. Malign *dispositions* and vindictive *habits* are miserable encumbrances of the mind ; as if a man would sustain the load of armour, night and day, and carry shield and lance ; though probably he may not encounter a foe once in the year. The checks of opinion, the motives of mutual interest, and the provisions of law, are in readiness to defend us from every aggression — those only excepted which must be repelled at the instant they are made, or not at all.

That excitement of the faculties which a sudden perception of danger occasions, not merely bears proportion to the nearness and extent of the peril, but has a relation to its supposed origin also. This excitement, to answer its end, must possess an affinity

with the aggressive cause. The repellant power must be such as is the assailant power. A quick sympathy with the hostile purpose of an antagonist belongs to the emotion at the impulse of which we are to withstand his attack. Simple alarm, and its attendant courage, are enough if the danger we have to meet arises from material causes only; but anger, and the courage peculiar to anger, is called up when MIND contends with mind, that is to say, when an injury is to be warded off which (whether truly so or not) we believe to spring from the inimical intention of a being like ourselves. In this case the mere instruments of the threatened harm are forgotten, while we rouse ourselves to grapple—soul against soul.

There may be those who would ask—Why should we suppose these irascible emotions, liable as they are to abuse, and destructive as they often become, to be original ingredients of our nature; or why needs man be furnished with any impulses more potent or complex than those given him as a defence against physical injuries? The answer is not difficult.—An additional motive and a more vigorous spring is needed in the one case, which is not requisite in the other, because the danger in the one is of a more recondite quality than in the other, and demands therefore a commensurate provision. If, for our safety, we must know to what extent, at what distances, and under what conditions, fire may destroy or torment us; we must, for a like reason, know the nature and extent of the harm that may arise from the rage of a furious man. Now it does not appear that the exigency of the moment could be

met in any way so efficaciously—if at all, as by a sudden sympathy with the ill intention of our enemy ; a sympathy which, as by a flash of consciousness, puts us into possession of his evil purpose. The rage or the malice of the aggressor, thus reflected upon the imagination of whoever is its object, informs him, with the rapidity of lightning, of what he should prepare himself to meet. May we not properly admire the simplicity and the fitness of this machinery ?

It is another question, and one which does not now press upon us—Whence comes that first malignant purpose or hostile intention against which the irascible emotions are provided ? Evil existing as it does, we are here concerned only with the arrangement made for repelling it. Let it then be remembered, that inasmuch as the hostile powers of MIND are more pernicious, because more various, insidious and pertinacious than those of matter, there is required more motive, and more energy to resist them. Now this necessary accession of power is borrowed for the moment when it is wanted, by sympathy from the aggressor. He who rises in fatal rage upon his fellow, does, by the contrivance of nature, and at the very instant of his violent act, put into the hand of his victim a weapon that may actually avert the stroke. The vicious and exaggerated condition in which these passions usually present themselves (a condition accidental, not necessary) should not prevent our assigning to the wisdom and benignity of the Creator what conspicuously exhibits both.

Yet all we see around us of the wisdom and be-

nevolence of the Author of Nature, especially as displayed in the constitution of the sentient orders, would stand contradicted if it appeared that passionate resentments were otherwise than painful.* In fact we do not find them to be entertained as modes of gratification until after they have gone into the unnatural condition of permanent dispositions ; and even then the gratification, if such it can be called, is wrung out from the very torments of the heart.

There is, however, an instance that may seem to be at variance with our assumptions ; and it is one which should be fairly looked at.—Of what sort then is the pleasure of consummated revenge ; and whence does it spring ? or must we trace it to the original constitution of the mind ? To answer such a question we should go back to the elements of the moral sense.—Let it then be remembered that this sense, indispensable as it is to rational agency and to responsibility, implies, not only a consciousness of pleasure in the view of what is good, benign, and generous ; but an equal and correspondent feeling, necessarily painful, towards the opposite qualities, whether of single actions or of character. We cannot so much as form a conception of a moral sense that should possess one of these faculties apart from the other : as well suppose the eye to be percipient of light, but unconscious of darkness. The power of approval is a nullity, if it do not involve a power of disapproval and disgust. What sort of languid and vague instinct were it, which, though capable of high delight in the contemplation of

*. ——— ὁ δὲ ὀργῇ ποιῶν πᾶς, ποιεῖ λυπούμενος.

virtue and beneficence, should look without emotion upon the infliction of wanton torture, or upon acts of injustice, fraud, or impurity? We may indeed imagine a world into which no evils and no discords or deformities should gain admission; but it is impossible to conceive of sentient beings, endowed with faculties of pleasure, such as should involve no power of suffering. Whoever would be capable of happiness, must undergo the possibility of misery, equally intense; or if the power of enjoyment be greater than the power of suffering, the whole amount of the difference is just so much torpor, or so much relaxation. A sense or faculty may indeed be numbed or paralyzed; but although such damage should secure an exemption from pain, no one would boast of it as a natural perfection.

The sense of fitness, whence arises our acquiescence in retributive proceedings, implies an uneasiness not to be dismissed, or even an intense consciousness of pain, so long as merited punishment is diverted, or delayed, or its ultimate arrival is held in doubt. Few emotions are more racking than that which attends the indeterminate delay of righteous retribution. And then, as every faculty of pleasure involves a liability to pain, so does a sudden release from pain, mental or bodily, bring with it a sensation which, if we must hesitate to call it pleasure, it will be hard to designate at all. Thus the extreme uneasiness that attends the delay of retribution, is, when at length relieved by the infliction of due punishment, followed by an emotion (very transient in benignant minds) which, if it may not be called pleasurable, must remain undescribed. We have

only to add that, as the exaggerations of self-love render the common desire of retribution intense—shall we say intolerable, if *self* be the sufferer, so, and in the same degree, will the pleasurable sense of relief be enhanced when, after a doubtful delay, ample retribution alights on its victim. The continuance, or the brief duration of this malign gratification might be taken as a gauge of the nobility or baseness of the mind that entertains it. If a generous spirit admits at all any such emotion, it will refuse to give it lodgment longer than a moment, and will gladly return to sentiments of compassion and forgiveness. On the contrary, a mind, by disposition and habit rancorous, derives from an achieved revenge a sweetness not soon spent, and which is resorted to, year after year, as a cordial.

To entertain any desire at a distance from its due occasion, and in the absence of its fit object, is always to undergo some degree of corruption of the faculties—a corruption which, if not checked, spreads as a canker even through the powers of animal life. All kinds of introverted mental action, even of the most innocent sort, are more or less debilitating to both mind and body, and trebly so when attended by powerful emotions. Might it not be said that health—both animal and intellectual, is emanative movement, or a progression from the centre, outwards : and is not disease a movement in the reverse direction ? Assuredly those vices are the most destructive, the most rancorous, and the most inveterate, which are peculiarly meditative, or the characteristic of which is *rumination*.

By extending themselves beyond their immediate occasion, the irascible passions are quickly converted from acts into habits. Thus anger becomes petulance or hatred : wrath slides into cruelty ; disgust into moroseness ; dislike into envy ; and at last the whole course of nature is “ set on fire ;” or worse—undergoes the tortures of a slow and smothered combustion.

The transition of the passions from momentary energies to settled dispositions, does not advance far without the aid of what may be termed a *reverberative process*, not very difficult to be traced. A malign temper imputes to an adversary, not a momentary hostility ; but *an evil nature*, and a settled animosity, like its own. The supposition takes its measure and its quality from the sentiment whence it springs ; and as the irascible emotion has now become a constant mood of the mind, so is *malignant character* imputed to whoever is its object. Evil passions, at this stage, are fast attaining their maturity, and fail not soon to gain an absolute mastery over the soul. The meditation of evil abroad, inflames evil at home : the infatuated being challenges its adversary to take a lodgement even within the palpitating ramparts of the heart, so that the conflict may go on as an intestine war at all hours, and in all seasons : night does not part the combatants ; nay rather it is then that, like other savage natures which stalk forth from their lairs in the dark, evenomed hatreds, while children of peace are sleeping, wake up, and rend their prey.

If anger be simply painful, hatred involves the very substance of misery. How should it then, we

may ask, subsist in the human mind, the first instinct of which is the desire of happiness? Strong as is this instinct, it takes effect only under certain conditions, and here are circumstances which make us refuse to taste the least gratification until some disturbance of feeling that has happened, is adjusted. Minds of a sensitive order repel every solicitation of pleasure so long as one who is beloved suffers; and this, even when the object of fondness is far distant, and beyond the reach of any active service. The happiness of those we love is an indispensable condition of our own; and there are other necessary conditions of personal peace, and some so inseparable from human nature that they can never be evaded. Of these we have already mentioned that which belongs to the Retributive sentiment, and which forbids us to rest while the author of a wrong enjoys impunity.

A sort of fascination leads the tortured soul that is the victim of these feelings, in a double line; on the one hand it eagerly pursues its desire of revenge; and on the other, labours to establish its own conviction of the *malignant nature* of its adversary. In its efforts to obtain this double satisfaction, it revolves all evidences, real or imaginary, of the innate atrocity of its foe; for if this point were but fully settled, SELF would be cleared of the imputation of wrong; and the arrival of retribution would seem so much the more probable. But far from reaching a definite conclusion with which it might rest satisfied, and so return to the common enjoyments of life, the racked spirit feels that the very cogitation of its doubt only enhances the

motives that give it force. Inflamed and insatiate, the distracted being returns ever and again to the salt stream that, at every draught, aggravates its thirst ! In this fever of the heart the assuagement of the inward torment by the destruction of its adversary, is the only happiness it can think of.

And yet even the most extreme instances that could be adduced of the predominance of the malignant passions would serve to attest, at once the excellence of the original constitution of human nature, and the indestructible property of its moral instincts. Not the most furious of men can indulge his passion until after he has attributed an ill intention to the object of his wrath. To be angry with that which is confessed to be innoxious, or devoid of hostile feeling, is a reach of malignity that lies beyond the range of *human* passions, even when most corrupted, or most inflamed. How else can we account for the absurd use which the angry man makes of the *prosopopœia*, when he happens to be hurt, torn, or opposed by an inanimate object : the stone, the steel, the timber, which has given him a fall, or has obstructed his impatience, he curses on the *hypothesis* that it is conscious and inimical : nay, he would fain breathe a soul into the senseless mass, that he might the more reasonably revile and crush it !

And so, when hatred has become the settled temper of the mind, there attends it a bad ingenuity, which puts the worst possible construction upon the words, actions, looks, of the abhorred object. Yet why is this, but because the laws of the moral system forbid that any thing should be hated, unless

it actually deserves, or is thought to deserve abhorrence? The most virulent heart has no power of ejecting its venom upon a fair surface; it must slur, whatever it means to poison. To hate that which is confessed to be not *wicked*, is as impossible as to be angry with that which is not assumed to be *hostile*; and the most depraved souls, whose only element is revenge, feel the stress of this necessity not a whit less than the most benign and virtuous. Whether the universe any where contains spirits so malign as to be capable of hating without assignment of demerit, we know not; but certainly man never reaches any such frightful enormity.

What is the constant style of the misanthrope? What the burthen of the dull echoes that shake the damp from the roof of his cavern? His theme is ever and again—the malignity, the cruelty, the falseness, of the human race. To hate mankind is indeed his rule; but yet he must calumniate, before he can detest it. Nature is here stronger than corruption, and a tribute is borne to the unalterable principles of virtue, even by those unnatural lips that breathe universal imprecations! How does the solitary wretch—the prisoner as he is of his own malignity, toil from day to day in the work of ingenious detraction! how does he recapitulate and refute, untired, every alleged extenuation of human frailty or folly! How does he strive to *justify* the bad passion that rules him; how eagerly does he listen to any new proof of his poisonous dogma—That man is altogether abominable, and *ought* to be hated! Inwardly he feels the absurdity of perpetual malice, and is always defending himself against the

accusation of doing immense wrong to his species. But this very labour, and this painful ingenuity refutes itself; for if human nature were, as he affirms it to be, simply and purely evil, his own bosom would not be thus tortured by the endeavour to prove mankind abominable, as a necessary condition of his malice. Most evident it is that if man were not formed to love what is good and to follow virtue, he would find himself able to hate his fellows without first imputing to them wickedness and crimes!

There might be adduced a still more frightful case of malignancy, which furnishes the very same testimony in favour of the original benign structure of the human mind. If there are indeed miserable beings that harbour deliberate animosity against Him who is worthy of supreme affection, as well as reverence, yet this hatred must always be preceded by *blasphemy*. In word or in thought, there must be charged upon the Sovereign Ruler injustice, rigour, malevolence, before impiety can advance a step towards its dread climax. Thus does the Supreme Benevolence receive an implicit homage, even from the most envenomed lips; for why should the divine character be impeached, if it were not that the fixed laws of the moral world—those very laws of which God is author, forbid hatred to exist at all (at least in human nature) except on a pretext which is itself drawn from the maxims of goodness? What proof can be more convincing than is this, that these maxims—these rules of virtue and benevolence, were actually the guiding principles of the creation, and must therefore belong as essential

attributes to the Creator? If man, by the necessity of his nature, must calumniate and blacken whomsoever he would call his enemy, is it not because he is so constituted as to detest only what he thinks to be evil? The fact indeed is appalling, that rational agents should any where exist who can set themselves in array against the source and centre of all perfection! But how much more appalling, nay—how horrible a thing were it, to find beings whose nature allowed them to hate the Sovereign Goodness, without first defaming it!

An inference here suggests itself which bears upon the future destinies of man. Does not the history of human nature declare that all other emotions of the soul, as well as every restraint of interest or pride, may give way, and be borne down by the desire of retribution? This same feeling has more than once impelled a father to consign his sons to the sword of public justice; it has strengthened the arm of a man, not murderous in disposition, to drive an assassin's sword into the heart of his friend; it has brought a nation around the walls of a devoted city, the site of which, after being soaked with the blood of men, women, and babes, was to be covered with perpetual ruin; and does not this same motive support the most humane minds in discharging the sad duty of conducting a fellow-man to death? We see too that the desire of inflicting retributive pains is often enhanced prodigiously by the impulses of self-love. Now, may it not be conceived, that an equal intensity of this emotion might be obtained by the means of some other sentiment than self-love, and by one more firm, because more sound, than the

selfish principle? If so, then we have under our actual inspection powers which, in a future life, may be found vigorous enough to carry human nature through services too appalling even to think or speak of. If, for example, it were asked—Is it credible that man, his sensibilities being such as they are, should take his part, even as spectator, in the final procedures of the Divine Government? We might fairly reply by referring to certain signal instances of the force of the vindictive passions, and on the ground of such facts assume it as possible that, whoever could go so far, might go further still. And this hypothetic inference would not be invalidated merely because revenge is malign and evil: for although it be so, the fulcrum of its power is nothing else than the unalterable laws of the moral world; we only want therefore a *righteous* motive to supplant the *selfish* one, and then an equal, or perhaps a much greater force, would be displayed by these same principles.

If it be allowable to advance to this point, we then shall need only one more idea to give distinctness to our conception of the retributive processes of the future world; and it is this—That the infatuations of self-love, which, in the present state, defend every mind from the application to itself of the desire of retribution (in the same manner as the principle of animal life defends the vital organs of a body from the chemical action of its own caustic secretions) that these infatuations, we say, being then dispersed, the Instinct of Justice—perhaps the most potent of all the elements of the spiritual life, shall turn inward upon each consciously guilty heart, so

that every such heart shall become the prey of a reflected rage, intense and corrosive as the most virulent revenge! Whoever is now hurrying on without thought of consequences through a course of crimes, would do well to imagine the condition of a being left without relief to breathe upon itself the flames of an insatiable hatred!

SECTION III.

ALLIANCE OF THE MALIGN EMOTIONS WITH THE IMAGINATION.

IF nature denies to the irascible passions any attendant sense of pleasure, she absolutely refuses them also, at least in their simple state, the power of awakening the sympathy, or of exciting the admiration of those who witness their ebullition. These harsh elements of the moral system must be taken into combination with sentiments of a different, and a happier order, before they can assume any sort of beauty, or appear in splendour. That such combinations do actually take place, and in conformity too with the intentions of nature, is true; but it is true also, that, by the very means of the mixture, the worse or rancorous element is moderated and refined. Let it be granted, for example, that wars have often originated in the military ambition and false thirst of glory to which certain gorgeous sentiments give an appearance of virtue. This may be true, but can we easily estimate the degree in which war universally has been softened and relieved in its attendant horrors, by the corrective influence of these very mixed emotions, extravagant and false as they are? And is it certain that there would have been alto-

gether less bloodshed on earth, if mere sanguinary rage, and if the cupidity of empire, had been left to work their ends alone? For every thousand victims immolated at the altar of martial pride, ten thousand have been rescued by the generous usages that have belonged to the system of warfare among all civilized nations. Surely it may be said that, unless the imaginative sentiments had thus blended themselves with the destructive passions, the ambition of men would have been like that of fiends, and the human family must long ago have suffered extermination.

Ideas of chivalrous virtue and of royal magnanimity (ideas directly springing from the imagination) much more than any genuine sentiments of humanity, have softened the ferocious pride of mighty warriors. For although it may be true that some flashes of mere compassion have, once and again, gleamed from the bosoms of such men; yet assuredly if good will to their fellows had been more than a transient emotion, the sword would never have been their toy. But the imaginative sentiments are a middle power, in the hands of nature, which, because they may be combined more readily than some higher principles, with the gross and dark ingredients of the human mind, serve so much the better to chasten or ameliorate what cannot be expelled. Except for emotions of this order, Alexander would have been as Tamerlane; and Tamerlane as the Angel of Death.

The beneficial provisions of nature are especially to be observed in one remarkable fact, namely—That the alliance of the malign passions with the Imagination, an alliance from which the former draw both

their mitigation, and an extension of their field, is not permitted to take place upon the narrow ground of self-love. This fact, for such we deem it, deserves to be distinctly noticed.

Nothing appears too great, sometimes, to be grasped by the conceits of self-importance; nothing too big for the stomach of vanity: and yet it is found that the imagination refuses to yield itself, except for a moment, or in a very limited degree, to those excitements that are drawn from the solitary bosom of the individual. Man, much as he may boast himself, is by far too poor *at home* to maintain the expense of his own splendid conceptions of personal greatness. Not even when he revolves the vast idea of his immortality, is he able to accumulate the materials of sublimity, without looking abroad and beyond himself, in search of objects fitted to quicken the emotions of greatness and dignity. And yet surely if any idea, purely selfish, had power to call up and sustain such emotions, the idea of endless existence might do so. But when we meditate upon eternity, and think of our own part in it, we dwell much more upon the scenes, the personages, and the events it shall connect us with, than conceive of ourselves, simply, as destined to live for ever. It is no wonder then if this same rule holds good, when nothing beyond the present scene of things is contemplated. We can hardly err in assigning the reason of a mechanism so remarkable. If human nature had been so constituted as that the imaginative emotions could have found sufficient range within the lone precincts of the soul, and if there had been opened to every one (or at least to heroic spirits) a world of splendid

illusions, such that he should have had no need to look abroad, man must have become, in a frightful sense, an insulated being ; nor perhaps would any other impulse, drawn either from his wants, his fears, or his affections, have availed to connect him firmly and permanently with his fellows. No conception much more appalling can be entertained than that of a proud demigod, who, finding an expanse of greatness within his own bosom—an expanse fraught with objects in contemplation of which he could incessantly delight himself, should start off from the populous universe, and dwell content, as in the centre of an eternal solitude !

It may be well assumed that the Creator has granted to none of his rational family the prerogative of so fatal a sort of self-sufficiency. Assuredly no such power is granted to man. Even those instances that may seem the most nearly to approach the idea just now mentioned, do in fact, when accurately looked at, support the general principle. The man of the wilderness, for example, is still a social being, although in a very perverted manner ; and we should find convincing proof of the fact if we could only listen to those often rehearsed and monotonous soliloquies of which the great world—its noise, its vanity, and its corruptions are the theme. He does indeed congratulate himself anew every day that mankind is far remote from his cell. But why can he not drop this reference altogether ? Why not cease to think of what he does not see—does not feel ? It is because the gloomy and vexed imagination of the solitary—spite of itself, can find none but the faintest excitements within its own circle, and so is driven

to roam abroad in search of stimulants. The world, we may be assured, is as indispensable a material to the enthusiasm of the anchorite, as it is to that of the busiest and most ambitious votary of fame. Only let some breathless messenger—like those that brought tidings of dismay to the Arabian patriarch, reach the cavern of the hermit, and announce to him that his love of solitude was at length effectively and for ever sealed by the utter extinction of the human race:—solitude, from that instant, would not merely lose all its fancied charms, but would become terrible and insufferable; and this man of seclusion, starting like a maniac from his wilderness, would run round the world, in search, if haply it might be, of some straggling survivors!

Nor is it a few foreign materials that are enough to give effect to the alliance of the imagination with the selfish principle. A vigorous enthusiasm must embrace a broad field. Thus it is that patrician pride, and the arrogance of illustrious blood must not only go very far back, but must stretch itself very widely too, before it can acquire the force that distinguishes imaginative sentiments. The pride of ancestry is a sullen grace, and has about it an air akin to melancholy or depression. The enthusiasm of the very meanest member of a warrior-clan is tenfold more *animate* than that of the head of a house laden with the decorations of heraldry. In the former instance the imagination grasps the compass of the community of which the individual is a part: in the latter, one slender line, terminating in *self*, is all that engages the fancy; and it is in vain, with so attenuated an object only in view, that pride chides itself for its

sluggish movements. The Chief must think of his *people*, more than of his *ancestry*, if he would, on any special occasion, gain a powerful spring of action. In truth it is more as a Chief than as the representative of an illustrious stock, that the energetic patrician exults in his distinctions, and achieves deeds worthy of the name he bears.

Martial enthusiasm especially demands the social elements as its ground: and here we reach that very compound sentiment which, as to its construction, stands immediately parallel with religious rancour and Fanaticism. The one species of ardent emotion differs from the other more in its adjuncts and its objects, than in innate quality. The battle-fury of the CLAN is only self-love, inflamed by hatred, and expanded, by aid of the imagination, over the width of the community with which the individual consorts. It is this envenomed enthusiasm that renders the CHIEF of the horde the object of a more zealous idolatry than is offered to the GOD of the horde: and it is this that lends a measure of nobility and importance to even the most abject son of the tribe. It is this feeling which knits the phalanx, shoulder to shoulder, when the marshalled family advances to meet its ancient rival in the field. It is this passion—the enthusiasm of gregarious rage, that puts contempt upon death, gives a brazen firmness to the nerves when torture is to be endured, seals the lips in impenetrable secrecy when a trust has to be preserved; and, in a word, imparts to human nature a terrible greatness which we are compelled at once to abhor and to admire.

What is the clangorous music of barbarous armies,

or the rhapsodies of their poetry, but the modulated expressions of a ferocity which the imagination has already inflamed, ennobled, purified, and softened? The frigid philosopher may affirm that music and poetry are *incentives* to the battle-passions. It is true that they are; yet take away such incentives, and man is thrown back upon his mere malignity, and becomes more dreadful to his species than a tiger.

But the imagination has a limit beyond which it does not vigorously act. If it is not, as we have said, to be stimulated by ideas merely selfish; it becomes, on the other hand, languid, or ceases to exert an efficient influence over the passions, when the field of its exercise is very much extended. The men of a mighty empire, embracing various tribes, know little of the intense patriotism or of the unconquerable courage that distinguishes the heroes of a petty clan. Self, in this case, cannot retain its hold of an aggregate so vast; and although the object be immensely greater, the motive is incomparably less than in the other instance. If it were not that general intelligence, and a better knowledge of the science of government, and more skill in war, ordinarily attach to extended empire, and supply the place of personal enthusiasm, the history of nations would present, in a perpetual series, what in fact it has often presented—the subjugation of all larger social bodies by the smaller. But thus is the great polity of mankind balanced: men possess vastly more individual motive, and more spontaneous power, as members of a small than of a large community. Meanwhile the greater bodies have at command, not

only a larger sum of physical force, but more knowledge, and principle, and order, than often exist in petty states. So it is that the small and the great coexist upon the same surface; and that the course of conquest has been alternate—in one age a fraction breaks up the mass; in another the mass absorbs the fractions.

The valour of the clan not only stands parallel, as we have said, with religious fanaticism; that is to say, has one and the same Natural History, but it is most often found in combination with it. The two classes of passion are so nearly allied that the one readily follows upon the other. The vehement patriotism of the horde or little free state puts the minds of men into a ferment that does not long fail to introduce the stirring conceptions of Invisible Power; and when so brought in, the two ingredients become intimately blended: the civil and the religious frenzy form a compact sentiment of such vivacity as to carry human nature—if the solecism might be admitted, above and beyond the range of human agency. While the gods have been hovering over a field of carnage, the intrepidity of men has risen to the audacity of immortals; and their ferocity has resembled the rage of fiends!

Although it may be true, and we confidently assume it to be so, that a beneficial mitigation and refinement of the grosser elements of our nature accrues from their alliance with imaginative sentiments, yet it does not follow that such sentiments ought to supplant the true principles of morals, wherever these may take effect. Yet in fact genuine

piety has always had to contend against those splendid illusions which owe their specious graces and fair colours to the very admixture we are speaking of.

The unalterable maxims of rectitude, such as we find them in the Scriptures, being well understood, and firmly instated in their just authority, then indeed the imagination may take the part that belongs to it as the medium of communion among the various ingredients of the animal, social, and intellectual life. A difficulty, however, occurs, in assigning its proper office to this faculty, when it comes to mingle itself, as it so readily does, with the malign emotions. How large a portion of the pleasurable excitement that attends the reading of history springs directly from the recommendations which vindictive passions borrow from imaginative emotions! And as to the world of fiction—dramatic or poetic, perhaps a half of the power which such creations possess over the mind is attributable to the same cause. The moralist and the preacher, and especially when he has to do with the educated classes, finds that he has to loosen many of the most cherished associations of sentiment, and that he must denounce as evil, much that has been passionately admired, and that will be eagerly emulated.

To affirm in absolute terms that the irascible passions ought in no case to be allowed to blend with the imagination, so as may fit them to enkindle emotions of pleasure or admiration, would be going too far; and might bring the teacher of morals into serious embarrassments. We stop short then of so stern a conclusion; and shall be content to urge this more general rule, that the principles of benevolence,

of forbearance, of meekness, of gentleness, and of humility, as taught in the discourses of Christ, and enforced by his apostles, should in all instances to which they are applicable, be carried home—notwithstanding the repugnance of modes of feeling that are commonly honoured as generous and noble; and moreover, that every one professing obedience to the Gospel, should exercise an especial vigilance toward that entire class of sentiments over which profane history, romance, poetry, and the drama, have shed a glory.

The time shall come, when, by the universal diffusion of ■ pure Ethics—the ethics of the Bible, no room shall be left, and no need shall be felt, for the chastening influence which hitherto the imagination has exerted over the ferocious dispositions of mankind. An age shall come, when the gods and heroes of *history* shall hasten to those shades of forgetfulness which have long ago closed upon their patrons—the gods and heroes of *mythology*. In the same day the charm of fiction shall be dissolved, and the gaudiness of *false sentiment*, in all kinds, shall be looked at with the cold contempt which we now bestow upon the follies of *false worship*. Then too, the romance of this nineteenth century shall be bound in the bundle that contains the childish fables of olden times; and both together shall be consigned, without heed or regret, to sheer oblivion.

The slow but sure progress of society brings with it many *substitutions* of this sort, in which a less rational principle of action gives way to one that is more so. At the present moment we occupy just

that midway position which, while it allows us to gaze with idle curiosity upon the blood-stained stage of chivalry, and upon the deluged field of lawless ambition, forbids that any such modes of conduct should find a place among us as living realities. We have become too wise to give indulgence to that to which we still give our admiration! May not another step or two be taken on the path of reason, and then we shall cease even to admire, that which we have long ceased to tolerate?

So already it has actually happened in relation to those malign and sanguinary religious excitements which a few centuries ago kindled entire communities, and inflamed kings and mendicants, nobles and serfs, priests and wantons, abstracted monks and the dissolute rabble, with the frenzy of sacred ambition. Although we now peruse with wonder and curiosity the story of the Crusades, there are few readers in the present day—perhaps scarcely one, who can rouse up a sympathy with that vehement feeling which was the paramount motive of the enterprise. Only let us strip the history of the crusades of its elements of martial glory, and the simple *religious residue*—the proper fanaticism of the drama, would scarcely touch any modern imagination. How much more is this true of those horrid crusades of which the opponents of the Church of Rome have, at different times, been the victims! All feeling of alliance with the illusions that gave impulse to such abhorrent intestine wars has utterly passed away, nor could it (do we assume too much?) by any means be re-kindled;—the two emotions of pity for the sufferers, and of detestation of the actors in the scenes of fra-

tricide, are the only sentiments which the narrative can call up. Yet there was a time when men—born of women, and fashioned like ourselves, and men softened by education, and not uninformed by Christianity—saints and doctors, delicate recluses, and unearthly contemplatists—men who slept only three hours in the twenty-four, and prayed six or ten—when such gave all the passion of their souls, and all the eloquence of their lips, to the work of hunting thousands of their fellows—innocent and helpless, into the greedy fires of the Church !

Thus it appears that an order of sentiment—once allowed and lauded as magnanimous, and even divine, we have learned to regard as either purely ridiculous, or as abominable. A like reprobation inevitably awaits—if mankind is really advancing on the road of virtue, every mode of feeling which, being essentially malevolent, draws specious colours from the imagination. That which is true and just, in conduct and character, must at length supplant whatever, if stripped of its decorations, is loathsome or absurd. So certainly as the calm reason of Christianity spreads itself through the world, will the ground fall in beneath the gorgeous edifice of spurious imaginative virtue. Let but the process go on a little further, and it will become as impracticable to uphold in credit the opinion which admits of honour without justice or purity, and of magnanimity without benevolence, and of that thirst for glory which is sheer selfishness, as it would be now, after the mechanic arts have reached an unthought-of perfection, to keep in use the cumbrous hand-machines of the last century.

Much of the conventional law, and many of the

usages of private life, and especially the unwritten code of international policy, have yet to undergo a revolution as great perhaps as that which makes the difference between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries. All the vices, and the talents, and the institutions that are interested in the preservation of corrupt practices may oppose the advance of this renovation; but nothing short of the overthrow of Christianity and of civilization can arrest its progress. Nature—we use the word in a religious sense, NATURE is here at work with her noiseless mighty hand: whatever is spurious is marked already for oblivion, and moves on to its home.

SECTION IV.

FANATICISM THE OFFSPRING OF ENTHUSIASM ; OR
COMBINATION OF THE MALIGN EMOTIONS WITH
SPURIOUS RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.

THE Imagination, when inflamed by anger, or envenomed by hatred, exerts a much more decisive influence over the active principles and the character of men, than otherwise ever belongs to it. By the aid of these powerful elements of our nature, imaginative sentiments extend their empire, and bring under their sway minds of an order too robust to have yielded to softer impulses. A thousand fanatics have run their course of mischief who would have spurned religious motives altogether in the simpler form of mere enthusiasm. Rancour has been the reason of their religion, and its rule also, and end.

And as the empire of spurious religious sentiments is greatly extended when they come into alliance with the malignant passions, so do they acquire, from the same quarter, far more energy than they could boast in their simple state. A malignly inspired Enthusiasm carries human nature to the extreme boundaries of emotion that is possible to man :—nothing which the human heart may know lies beyond the circle occupied by fanatical extravagance.

But inasmuch as little more than the trite surface of human nature meets the eye among a people like ourselves, we may scarcely recognise as real some of these enormities of feeling. Living as we do under the meridian of mediocrity, history, when most faithful, sounds like romance; or even if we give credit to its narrations, we regard its lessons as of little practical significance, supposing that whatever is virulent or terrible, has now fallen from the usage of mankind.

It has even become difficult to place ourselves so far in sympathy with these extreme emotions as is necessary for understanding them. In all things, what is profound has given way to what is familiar; or what once was fact, is now thought of only as the fit subject for fiction. Men of the present age are care-worn oftener than melancholy; jovial, more than joyous; sagacious or ingenious, rather than meditative; and so eagerly occupied with the passing moment, as to throw up their interest, as well in the future as in the past. Custom and utility set bounds—and very narrow bounds, to all modes of conduct: the spirit of raillery imposes a disguise upon whatever emotions are not trivial. It is not indeed to be regretted that the constitution of society, in modern times, represses so much as it does the profounder and more virulent impulses of the soul; but the fact of this change and improvement should be kept in mind when the power of such emotions is to be calculated, or when conjecture is employed upon the possible events of another age. A free and vigorous government supersedes, nay almost extinguishes, the stronger passions. Private life,

happily, is too secure, and public affairs are too well settled, to afford those sudden and extraordinary excitements which awaken the utmost energies of men. It is despotism, plunging a ruthless hand into the bosom of domestic peace; it is ambition, immolating a thousand victims in an hour; it is popular fury, led on or repulsed by a single arm, that display the expansive force of the human mind when urged to an excess of feeling.

Even those natural excitements of the imagination, whence the deeper passions are wont to draw much of their vigour, are denied to us. England may indeed boast all the beauties of picture; but they are beauties in miniature. What we look upon around us is the scenery of poetry, rather than of tragedy; and it is a fact, if not constant, yet ordinary, that those portentous corruscations of the passions which ally themselves readily with the imagination, have burst out from the thick gloom of a frowning Nature. Such excesses have chiefly appeared where awful scenery, or extreme violences of climate have seemed well to comport with lawless sentiments, and frenzied actions. Man, that is to say when once effectively roused to action, acts quite another part than we think of, if his lot be to roam through howling solitudes, to traverse boundless levels of burning sand, to hide himself among cloud-covered precipices, to gaze upon the unalterable splendour of the sky; if often he stand aghast amid the earthquake or the hurricane, or be overtaken by sultry tempests, fraught with suffocation. It is in the heart of forests that are the ancient domain of enormous reptiles, or of savage beasts, it is where

horror and death lurk in the way, that the darker passions reach a gigantic growth, and are to be seen in their proper force. All the most characteristic forms of fanaticism have had their birth beneath sultry skies, and have thence spread into temperate climates—by transportation, or infection.

No such rule must be assumed as absolute—few rules that relate to human nature are so, but it is one as uniform as most, that where the imagination—and neither reason, nor the genuine affections, acts as the prime impulse in religion, the malign emotions are in close attendance, and seldom fail to convert spurious piety into an energetic rancour. Then again this rancour re-acts upon the enthusiasm whence it sprang; the child schools the parent—an inverted order of things not unusual where the progeny has much more vigour than the parent. Enthusiasm, when it has come to sustain Fanaticism, is more darkly coloured—is more profound, more mysterious, than the illusory piety that has no such load upon its shoulders. Things bright and fair, although unreal, are the chosen objects of this; but the other asks whatever is terrific and deadly. This sort of transmutation, which takes place when the enthusiast becomes the fanatic—when malignity is shed upon illusion, resembles what often occurs in feverish sleep, during which splendid and smiling pageants, gradually relinquishing the brilliant colours they first showed, as if the summer's sun were sinking from the skies, give way to a murky glimmer, peopled with menacing forms; and in the next moment some gory phantom starts forth, and becomes master of the scene!

The false religion then of the FANATIC includes elements not known to the mere Enthusiast; and before we descend to the particular instances it will be well to ascertain the general characteristics of the spurious malign religion which animates his bosom. They may be reduced to three articles, namely, 1st. A deference to MALIGNANT INVISIBLE POWER; 2d. the natural consequence of such a deference—rancorous contempt or detestation of the mass of mankind, as religiously cursed, and abominable; and 3d. the belief of corrupt favouritism on the part of the Invisible Power, towards a sect or particular class of men; and this partiality is the antithesis of that relentless tyranny of which all other men are the objects.

I. We have named—a deference, or religious regard to MALIGN INVISIBLE POWERS, whether Supreme or Subordinate, which will be found to enter, as a primary ingredient, into every form of Fanaticism, ancient and modern, and which may well be called its GERM.

To believe that evil has affected other races of rational agents, beside the human, and that such depraved and malignant beings, though unseen, infringe in some manner upon the human system—is one thing; and it is a belief which reason admits, and which revelation confirms: but either to impute, in any sort, malignancy to the Supreme Power, or to make subordinate malignant powers the objects of worship, direct or indirect, or to grant to their agency a prominent place among religious notions, is another thing; and it is a perversion of this sort,

more or less gross, and more or less apparent, that imparts force to every species of rancorous religious sentiment.

On a field like this, the imagination, if it be troubled by a gloomy temper, or made turgid by fierce passions, and especially if it be saddened by sufferings, will never want scope, or fail of excitements. In fact, nothing less than the hope which true religion imparts can bar the entrance of the mind into this realm of fear—a realm upon which mankind has in every age eagerly sought to make incursions. If we are to employ phrases in accordance with the testimony of history, we are bound to affirm that the NATURAL RELIGION of man, consists in the fear and service of Malignant Powers. Gloomy superstition springs up involuntarily in the human mind, depraved as it is, and exposed to so many pains, wants, and cruelties; and liable withal to death. Man does not become religious by force of gratitude: the unnoticed benefits of every hour lead him not to the shrine of the Supreme Beneficence: it is danger and sorrow that drive him to the altar. The necessities and miseries of the animal frame, the confusion and misrule that prevail in the social system, the stifled sense of guilt in every bosom, and the boding of future punishment, as well as the hatreds which woe and oppression cherish, are pungent elements, working in the soul with incomparably more force than belongs to the mild sentiments that may be engendered either by the spectacle of the order and beauty of the material world, or by the fruition of the common goods of life.

The theism of philosophers has never availed to

counteract that natural tendency which draws mankind to the worship of Evil Powers. Neither the ancient nor the modern systems of abstract philosophy have taken any strong hold of the spirits of men ; and the failure has happened not so much because such systems were too refined or too abstruse for vulgar apprehension ; but because they have not made provision for the actual position of man in the present state. Sages have announced the Divine perfections, and there they have stopped ; but to bring these perfections to bear, in any mode of effective relief, upon the guilt and sorrows of mankind, was a problem beyond their power. Let it be granted that philosophical theism were true in some far distant upper sphere ; but ON EARTH it serves to explain nothing ; it assuages no trouble, and is no more applicable to the real occasions of life, than are the dreams of the poet.

Of all the *popular* modes that have been devised for counteracting the tendency of mankind to malign superstition, that which was embodied in the mythology of the people of Greece may claim to have been the most successful, as well as the most rich and splendid. This system of worship—not so much the work of design, as the spontaneous product of the national mind, avoided to provoke the resentment of tortured hearts by giving a direct contradiction to their gloomy surmises ;—it did not interdict sanguinary superstition ; but rather occupied beforehand the elements of terror, and worked them up as the materials of its supernatural machinery. No example can be adduced, from any other quarter, of so skilful ■ substitution of the sublime and beautiful for the

terrific. Intellectual voluptuousness, with poetry, and the drama, with painting, architecture and sculpture, as its ministers, got the start of the violent passions, and of natural terrors; and without insulting human woe, as philosophy does, and without giving license to ferocious impulses, as was done by the oriental superstitions, it soothed every harsh feeling by the insinuating fascinations of melody, symmetry, and colour. The Grecian imaginative theology, after having preoccupied the human mind by its exquisite forms of ideal beauty, gave audience to the more fierce and malign emotions in their tranquil hour; or it brought them over unconsciously to such a mood.—The lion and the leopard are seen stalking along, if sullen, yet pacified, in the processions of revelry and joy.

The Malignant Powers had indeed their titles and images, and temples in Greece; but their tyranny was not permitted; and in accordance with this proscription, the priestly order was denied the means of extending its power. Nothing dark or cruel was suffered to irritate the minds of the people. Although fanaticism could not be absolutely excluded from the land of beauty, it received there more effectual modifications than it has anywhere else—the very circle of pure and true religion excepted. Hesiod, Pindar, Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Apelles, Phidias, were in fact, though not in form, the PRIESTS of the Grecian worship, and the doctors of its theology; and if they did not professedly teach religious truth, they yet disarmed religious error very much of its evil influence.

Historical justice demands, that when the absur-

dities and the impurity of the Grecian polytheism—both indeed very gross, are spoken of, its extraordinary influence in allaying the violence of fanaticism should be distinctly admitted. On this ground no other superstition of the nations can at all come into comparison with it. The same justice should moreover lead us to acknowledge—to acknowledge with bitter grief, that, in later times, the corruptions, first of the Jewish, and then of the Christian system, imparted a virulence to fanaticism, such as the contemporaries of Socrates and Plato would have shuddered to think of. The arrogant misanthropy of the Jew, the relentless intolerance of the Mohammedan, and worse than these, the insatiate ferocity of the Papal tyranny, were forms of evil, new to the world when they severally appeared; and they were such as gave an appearance of reason to the calumnies of philosophers, who affirmed that the western nations had discarded the ancient mythology to their cost.

II. The conceptions we form of the Divine Being, and our feelings toward our fellow men, are dependent one upon the other. As well by formal inference, as by mere contagion of sentiments, a belief in malignant divinities, or an imputation of malevolence to the Supreme Being, brings with it the supposition that the mass of mankind, or that certain portions of mankind, are the objects and victims of Divine malediction; and therefore may be, or ought to be, condemned, tormented, and destroyed.

A MALIGN THEOLOGY has invariably been followed by intolerance, execrations, cruelties. Thus it is that, as the belief in malevolent divinities, or the imputation of malevolence to the Supreme Being,

under any disguise of abstract terms, contradicts or distorts the notion of sovereign and impartial JUSTICE, to the tribunal of which nothing is amenable but *crime*, so the correspondent feeling towards mankind, engendered by such a belief, is not that of righteous disapprobation on the score of moral offences; but rather that of detestation, on the ground of ecclesiastical impurity. It is not as the transgressors of a holy law, but as the reprobate of Heaven, that men in particular, or that nations are to be shut out from the circle of our charities. The "herd" of mankind is spurned as *abominable*, not as *guilty*; and when once so grievous a perversion of feeling has taken place, then the whole of the force which belongs to our instinctive notions of retribution, or to our acquired belief of future judgment, is thrown into the channel of our sectarian aversions; and this force, like a mountain torrent, in so passing from an open to a narrow bed, gains a new impetuosity. Disapproval becomes rancour; virtuous indignation slides into implacable revenge; and acrid scorn completely excludes, not only all indulgence towards the frailty of men, but all compassion for their sorrows.

A sense of justice, founded on genuine notions of the Divine character and government, does not carry the mind beyond a mournful acquiescence in the infliction of due punishment upon the guilty. But it is quite otherwise with that perverted feeling which, while it draws its animation from hatred, derives its swollen bulk from the imagination:—the imagination inflamed by malignity, respects no bounds in its demand of vengeance. The very essence of Justice,

which is strictly to observe a *limit*, scandalizes the fanatic, who while he heaps terror upon terror, still fails to satisfy his conception of what might be fitting, as the doom of the accursed objects of his contempt. There is in the human mind, when profoundly moved, an eagerness to reach the depths of the most appalling ideas ; or to tread the very lowest ground of the world of woe and horror ! This appetite finds its proper aliment when a Manichæan belief is turned wildly loose upon the field of human misery : carnage, murder, slavery, torment, famine, pestilence, pining anguish ; or hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic fires, are so many articles in the creed of the malign being. Under the influence of this cavernous inspiration, pity is thought of, not merely as contemptible, but as impious ;—justice is injustice, and leniency the greatest of crimes. Are we here only giving point to a paragraph?—or has not history often and again verified such a description of the enormities which the human heart—badly informed, may entertain ?

III. But the Fanatic, inasmuch as he is an enthusiast born, must take up another element of character ; and this is drawn from the supposition of a corrupt favouritism on the part of the deity he worships, toward himself, and the faction of which he is a member. The Fanatic, and this we should keep in mind, is not a simple misanthrope, nor the creature of sheer hatred and cruelty : he does not move like a venomous reptile lurking in a crevice, or winding silent through the grass ; but soars in mid heaven, as a fiery flying serpent, and looks down from on high, upon whom he hates. Imaginative by temperament, his emotions are allied to hope and pre-

sumption, more closely than to fear and despondency : he firmly confides therefore, in the favour of the supernal powers towards their faithful votaries ; and in expectation of still more signal boons than yet he has received, offers himself to their service, as the bold champion of their interests on earth.

And besides, the imagination, when brought into play by self-love, must draw its excitements—as we have already said, from a circle which it can embrace. It will therefore be—a tribe, a sect, a faction, that affords a sphere to fanaticism ; and the infuriate zealot, how unsocial soever in temper, is compelled to love *a few*, so that he may be able, in the strength of that partial feeling, to hate the many with full intensity. The supposition of special favour towards ourselves, on the part of Heaven, will corrupt and debilitate, or will purify and invigorate the heart, precisely according to the quality of the notions we entertain of the Divine character. The idea of personal regard and affection from Him who loves only what is good and pure like Himself, can never operate to impair the moral sense : nay, this very idea, when freed from illusions, imparts elevation to virtue, and makes the temper and conduct of man on earth, to reflect the brightness of heaven. But on the contrary, theological notions, when sullied or distorted, vitiate in an extreme degree every sentiment of the deluded being who deems himself the darling of the skies. Let but such a doctrine be admitted as that the Divine favour is bestowed, not merely in disregard of virtue, but in contempt of it, and then religion, with all its powers, goes over to swell the torrent of impurity, cupidity, and malice. Under patronage

of a belief like this, virtue and vice change sides in the court of conscience ; and the latter claims sacred honours.

We recapitulate our three elements of Fanaticism, which, as we assume, will be discoverable, in different modes or proportions, under all its forms, namely—The supposition of malignity on the part of the object of religious worship—a consequent abhorrence of mankind at large, as the subjects of Malignant Power—and then, a credulous conceit of the favour of Heaven, shown to a few, in contempt of the principles of virtue.

Now we might, while following the track of history, exhibit the modifications these elements have undergone in the religious systems that have successively ruled in the world. But any method which observes the order of Time, though obvious and simple, is laden with the inconvenience of involving frequent repetitions of general principles. It will be better to seize upon certain leading varieties of our subject, as marked by broad distinctions, easily traced in every age, and such as may be recognized, whenever they may recur, without hazard of mistake. These conspicuous varieties may be brought under four designations, of which the first will comprehend all instances wherein malignant religious sentiments turn inward upon the unhappy subject of them : to the second class will belong that more virulent sort of fanaticism which looks abroad for its victims : the third embraces the combination of intemperate religious zeal with military sentiments, or with national pride, and the love of power : to the fourth class must

be reserved cases of the more intellectual kind, and which stand connected with opinion and dogma. Our first sort is Austere ; the second Cruel ; the third Ambitious ; and the fourth Factious.

Or, for the purpose of fixing a characteristic mark upon each of our classes, as above named, let it be permitted to entitle them as follows—namely, the *first*, The Fanaticism of the SCOURGE, or of personal infliction ; the *second*, the Fanaticism of the BRAND, or of immolation and cruelty ; the *third*, the Fanaticism of the BANNER, or of ambition and conquest ; and the *fourth*, the Fanaticism of the SYMBOL, or of creeds, dogmatism, and ecclesiastical virulence.

SECTION V.

FANATICISM OF THE SCOURGE.

THE broadest distinctions in the exterior behaviour of men, and the most marked dissimilarities in their apparent character, do not always bespeak a difference equally great in the elements of their temper. On the contrary, it is sometimes easy to trace in the minds of those between whose visible course of life there has been little or no resemblance, a close analogy. Yet even when such an analogy may be discerned, it is not always practicable to discover the causes of the external diversity which distinguishes them. Some occult peculiarity of the bodily temperament, or a forgotten incident of early life, may have been enough to determine whether certain impetuous passions should take their course abroad, or should boil as a vortex within the bosom. So is it that when a stream gushes from its cleft, the mere bend of a tree, or the angle of a rock, may be all the reason either of its taking its course westward, to measure the width of a continent; or toward the east, soon to find a home in some pent-up gully, or sullen cavern of the mountains.

Causes so inconsiderable, or so latent, we must

not hope always to detect. It will be enough if we can show reason for bringing together under the same general class, men who perhaps would both have recoiled with horror or with disdain to find themselves in each other's company !

Why the fanaticism of one man has devastated the world, while that of another has spent itself within the walls of a cloister, it may be impossible to say. Nevertheless there are instances of this sort which are easily explained : as for example ; violent or malign passions sometimes turn inward, and rankle in the heart that generates them, in consequence of the mere sluggishness or lassitude of the animal system which, while it insulates a man from others, as if he were enveloped in an indolent fog, yet does not much affect the interior of the character. There may exist a very high rate of moral or intellectual excitement, where the manners and mode of conduct indicate nothing but torpor. Just as, in some bottomless lakes, vehement under-currents or eddies make sport below, while the surface is stagnant. Not a few of our fanatics of the self-tormenting class come under this description.

There is to be found, too, here and there, a pride of personal independence, and a misanthropic arrogance, such that, as it spurns every sort of mutuality, compels the soul to feed on its own substance. It might seem enough for a man to refuse to draw his *satisfactions* from his fellows ; but there is a malignant pride more excessive than this, and which even refuses to be so far dependent upon other men as to call them the objects of its hatred, or revenge. There is ■ haughtiness so egregious that a man will con-

temn and torment himself sooner than condescend to look abroad as if he stood in need of any beings, as the objects of his ireful emotions. Though nature forbids that any such attempt at mental insulation should be altogether successful, yet the endeavour is made, and is renewed, day after day, by spirits of the order we describe. Again, there are instances in which a mild meditative humour, perverted by some false system of belief, or excessive sensibilities, that have chanced to be torn and outraged in the world, or much physical timidity, combined with lofty sentiments, produce the effect of introverting gloomy emotions upon the heart.

Mixed or mitigated examples present themselves on all sides ; but cases of *pure fanaticism*—our definition being kept in view, are rare ; or rather, are not readily separated from those dispositions with which it naturally consorts. Whether certain extravagant modes of conduct should be attributed to superstition ; or whether there be nothing in them worse than an absurd enthusiasm, it may be impossible to affirm. The best we can do is to catch the distinctive features of each kind, as the instances pass before us. Of all the facts that might be adduced, and they would soon fill volumes, illustrative of the system of monkish austerity, very few broadly and incontestibly exhibit the *virulent* motives which, nevertheless, the entire history of that system demonstrates to have been in operation throughout it. Especially is it to be observed, that a cautious adherence to a certain accredited and admired style of expressing the monkish doctrines conceals the passions that were working beneath the surface of

its placid sanctity. No one who is conversant with the ascetic writers can have failed to discern the strong heavings of human nature under the pressure of that system, even when it might be difficult or impossible to adduce formal proof of the hidden commotion. What we have now to do is broadly to characterise this species of fanaticism ;—not such as it is formally represented in the encomiastic pages of Theodoret, Sozomen, Isidore, Macarius, Palladius, Cassian ; or of Basil and Bernard ; but such as, after a candid perusal of these and other writers of the same class, we are compelled to believe it to have been.*

There are three distinct elements upon which fanatical sentiment, when introverted, employs itself ; and in each instance the product is very distinguishable. These are, 1st. the miseries, physical and mental, to which man is liable. 2d. the consciousness of personal guilt, and the dread of retribution ; and, 3d. the supposition of supererogatory or vicarious merit. The working of the soul upon each of these excitements demands to be briefly exhibited.

1st. There is a rebellion of proud hearts against the calamities to which human life is exposed, such as impels, sometimes, disordered minds to take up their burden of woe spontaneously, rather than wait till it be imposed. “ If pain, sorrow and want are to be my companions, I vow to have none beside.

* The Author having in another volume considered the Monkish institute and doctrine as the product and parent of ENTHUSIASM, has now only to advert to those stronger features of the system which mark it as Fanatical, or *virulent*.

I will run forward and embrace wretchedness. I will live for Misery, so that she may never overtake me, or set me as the mark of her arrow. Disappointment shall for me hold no shaft which I will not have wrenched from her cruel hand, ere it can be hurled. The power of bodily pain shall have no anguish in store which I will not freely have forestalled. Famine, thirst, heat and cold, shall assail me with no new lesson of distress ; for I will frequent their school. Every pang the flesh or the heart can feel, I will prevent, by existing only for sorrow. Even that unknown futurity of evil which death may reveal, I will penetrate by continual meditation of horrors. So will I daily converse with ghastly despair, as to taste beforehand the very worst, and to nullify fear by familiarity." Modes of feeling such as this, have been indulged ; and perhaps even now are not unknown to some. While we are looking on the frivolous, the busy, and the sensual field of common life, as spread out around us, it may be hard to believe that the human mind ever travels on a path so deep-sunken. But we have only to turn aside a little from the beaten road, and we shall find that instances of this sort actually belong to the history of man.

A desperate and sullen pride has usually marked the oriental (polytheistic) austerities ; and in India we may see unmasked, that which in Europe has disguised itself under Christian modes of expression. Very little that offends against the professed humility of the ascetic life is to be found on the pages of the writers who give us the principles and rules of the system, and who, for the most part, were themselves

actually happy under it, as Enthusiasts. What might be the bitterness of the heart in those who were its victims, we are left to surmise:—there were more motives than one for imposing perpetual silence upon the inmates of the monastery. The founder of the order, or its reformer, might talk aloud, and declaim as he would upon the felicity of his condition ; for with him the fanaticism was of a sort that might be known and looked at ; but not so with the fraternity at large. A de Rancé or a Eustache de Beaufort might speak :—but their companions must utter no whisper of their sorrows.*

* St. Bernard, intending no doubt to recommend the monastic state, pleasantly compares the monks to the fish in a puddle ! “Sunt et in stagnis mundi pisces, qui in claustris Deo serviunt in spiritu et veritate. Meritò siquidem stagnis monasteria comparantur, ubi quodammodo incarcerati pisces evagandi non habeant libertatem.” (*Serm. in Fest. S. Andr. Apost.*) And a horrid prison, according to his own confession, was the monastery : “*Duro me carceri mancipavi.*” (*Epist. 237.*) So much so, that it seemed to the saint himself the greatest of all miracles that men should be found who were willing to endure its discipline. Let us hear him when, on a high day, he is haranguing the fraternity : “Quid mirabilius, &c. Quod majus miraculum, quando tot juvenes, tot adoloscetes, tot nobiles, universi denique quos hic video, velut in carcere aperto tenentur sine vinculis, solo Dei timore confixi : quod in tanta perseverant afflictione pœnitentiæ, ultra virtutem humanam, supra naturam, contra consuetudinem ?” (*Serm. in dedicat. eccles.*) A general fact, on the ground of which we may argue more confidently than from the disguised language of men whose enslaved spirits knew nothing of ingenuousness, is this, that as the monastic system sprung up amid the persecutions of the second century, so has it flourished most, and been carried to the greatest extremes, in times of public calamity and disorder. The miseries of the open world have been reflected upon the austerities of the cell—that camera obscura. It appears

2d. A proud forestalling of misery, such as we have just spoken of, naturally combines itself with the consciousness of guilt and a dread of retribution; and both together lead to the same voluntary endurance of extreme pains; he who thinks himself both a victim and a culprit would fain take the engine of retributive torment into his own hand, lest it should be laid hold of by the Vindictive Power; and the hope he entertains of acting always as proxy for the minister of Justice, in his own case, bears proportion to the rigour with which he exercises the function of executioner.*

What spectacle in nature so monstrous, what, at first sight, so inexplicable, as that of an excruciated devotee who scorns even to writhe or to sigh under tortures which other men would not endure an hour,

plainly that the excessive abstinences and the savage habits of the Egyptian eremites, so much admired by the Church writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, were little more than a fantastic form of the wretchedness of the people of the country. As much as this is confessed by some of the eulogists of these horrid saints. Thus for example Palladius. As to what relates to eating and drinking (speaking of a certain Macarius and his companions) I need say little, since nothing like gluttony is to be found there, even among the most indulgent of the monks, who live at large; or any thing to distinguish them from the people of the country: and this as well by reason of the scarcity of food, as from the impulse of a Divine zeal—καὶ διὰ τὴν σπανὴν τῶν χρειῶν, καὶ διὰ τὸν κατὰ θεὸν ζῆλον.—*Lausiac Hist.* c. 21.

* Christian sentiments modify feelings of this sort, and give them a more humble guise. “Ergo qui pœnitentiam agit, offere se debet ad pœnam, ut hîc puniatur à Domino, non ad supplicia æterna servetur: nec expectare tempus, sed occurrere divinæ indignationi.” (*Ambrose in Ps. xxxvii.*) Do the apostles speak in any such style? The transition was easy from a doctrine like this, to the most extreme austerities.

to save or to obtain a mountain of gold ! Yet he sustains, year after year, his burden of woe in the mere strength of the obduracy of his soul ! Bound to the stake ; but bound only by the cords of pride ! Does not then a spectacle like this afford an impressive lesson ? After we have scoffed at the folly, or wondered at the infatuation of the voluntary sufferer, we might well return and ask, whether so strange a perversion of the power of the spirit over the body, does not furnish evidence of an overthrown greatness in the human mind, such as the atheist and sceptic leave out of their theory of man ? If it be said that these witless personal inflictions take place in consequence only of an error of belief, and may properly be compared to the ill-directed fatigues of a traveller who, on wrong information, pursues a worse road when he might have found a better, let only the experiment be tried of leading, into a parallel error, any being to whom the body and its welfare is the supreme and only interest to be cared for. Not a step could ever be set by such a being towards a folly of this order. The liability of man to go so far astray springs from those ulterior principles that are involved in his nature, and which bespeak an immortal destiny. Every such practical absurdity is an implicit proof of the presence of a capacity, although latent, for entertaining the highest truths ; and if man be the only fool among the tribes of earth, and the only wretch, it is because he alone might be wise, virtuous, and happy.

On this ground the voluntary endurance of tortures, from motives of religion, may be assumed as evidence of the intrinsic superiority of the mental, over

the animal principles of our nature ; for, when the body prevails, as too often it does, over the mind, it does so by the means of seductions and flatteries ; and we know that in this manner the noble may readily be made to succumb to the base. But when, as in the instance before us, the mental force triumphs over the physical will, it is in the way of an open trial of the relative strength of the two principles, and the stronger is found to prevail. These extraordinary facts furnish, moreover, a striking proof of the supremacy of the MORAL SENSE in the constitution of man ; for it is this chiefly that gives impulse to the practices of self-torture. And again, the relation of man to Invisible and Retributive Power is by the same means established ; inasmuch as the secret of every sort of self-infliction is a tacit compromise with Future Justice ; and when notions such as these take effect in an extreme manner, carrying all other reasons before them, we have evidence that, in the order of nature, Religion is the sovereign motive.

The fanatic is in error ; yet let it not be thought that he is unconscious of the principles of virtue. He is wrong on certain points of morality—calling good evil, and evil good ; but still it is good and evil that are the elements he works upon. And so in religion. His correspondence is with a Power of retributive government on high ; but he thinks amiss of that Power. His error is to impute malignancy, or a mere vindictive purpose, to the Invisible Authority ; and then he conceives of himself as having, by his transgressions, fallen into the hands of the irresistible avenger, who, as he thinks, takes advan-

tage of mankind only so far as sin brings them within the circle of his wrath ; or who starts forth, and catches an opportunity against men, when he finds them at fault.

A fanatical belief such as this is perhaps scarcely to be met with, except on the banks of the Ganges, or in the wilds of Africa. We describe the feeling in its extremes, and then, in turning to instances where a purer creed has softened what is harsh, and where a certain theological style disguises whatever is offensive, we may the better trace the elements of the same order of feeling under the concealments that recommend them. We must not expect to hear from the Christian ascetic an ingenuous expression of the emotions that torment his bosom : these are to be divined only by an interpretation of his behaviour.

Dread or dismay, when of long continuance, naturally settles down into some sort of calculation, or of compromise with the apprehended danger. And it is thus that there arises, within the troubled spirit of the man whose consciousness of guilt was at first intolerable, a whispered controversy with the vengeful Power ; or a dull wrangling concerning the precise amount of the mulct, and the mode of payment. The culprit, confessing that he has fallen under the power of his adversary, nevertheless does not despair of making terms more advantageous than at first he had thought of. With this hope he looks about for the means of righting his cause, or even of turning the balance in his favour. He even goes so far as to harbour the thought (natural to the mind when it has become the prey of rancorous emotions) of

justifying, to such an extent, the difference between himself and the Avenger, that if, after all, punishment should be inflicted, it shall be—and it shall seem to others, unrighteous and cruel, so that while writhing under it, the sufferer may console himself with the proud consciousness of merit, and may, even on the ground of severe justice, gain a right of retaliation.

At this point hope comes in, generating a new emotion, to give alacrity to the fortitude of the soul. The conscience-stricken man discovers that he possesses within himself—as if it were an inexhaustible fund, the power of enduring privations and pains: he may deny every gratification, he may sustain without a groan the most extreme anguish; and thus live only to suffer. And in his mode of estimating the absolving value of bodily torment, he reckons that, whatever price may be put upon those pains or abstinences which a man endures unwillingly, and from which he has no means of escaping, the merit of the same amount of affliction borne voluntarily, is tenfold greater.* Whoever then has the energy to inflict misery upon himself, may defy vindictive Power; for he commands the means of adding merit to merit, at such a rate of accumulation as shall quickly outstrip the reckoning of the adversary.

The fanaticism of personal infliction is not *ripened* until it approaches this point:—it wants spring and

* Οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἀπορῶν τῶν ἀναγκαίων καρτερικὸς, ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν ἀφθονίᾳ τῆς ἀπολαύσεως ἐγκαρτερῶν τοῖς δεινοῖς. So says Basil; and the sentiment might be put at the head of volumes of the spurious morality of the monkish writers.

warmth ; it is not tumid ; it has no heroism, so long as guilty dread is uppermost in the mind. But when pride takes its standing upon the supposition of merit won, and when Invisible Powers are deemed to have been foiled, then the spirit gets freedom and soars. Yet how pitiable is the triumph of the lacerated heart that thus vaunts itself in miseries, which are as useless as they are horrid ! Must we not mourn the infatuations of our nature, as we watch the ascent of the soul that climbs the sky, only to carry thither a sullen defiance of Eternal Justice ! So the bird of prey, beat off from the fold, and torn with the shepherd's shafts, its plumage ruffled, and stained with gore, flaps the wing on high, and fronts the sun, as if to boast before heaven of its audacity, and of its wounds !

It is after it has passed this stage, or when fear and humiliation give way to hope, to pride, or perhaps to revenge, that secondary motives are brought in, and fanaticism having become a mixed sentiment, is lowered in its tone ; and not seldom it degenerates into farce or hypocrisy ; or perhaps quite evaporates. Secondary motives of this kind would not however be listened to if it were not for the alleviations that arise from habit. The pains of mere privation, terrible as they may seem to the luxurious, the human mind soon learns to endure without repining ; nay, it derives at length a sombre satisfaction from the very paucity of its sources of comfort. A reaction, such as this, is not of rare occurrence. Certain tempers are alive to an emotion of personal independence which, when fully kindled, makes it absolutely delicious to a man to find that,

in comparison with those around him, he is free from solicitude, because free from wants—that a mere morsel of the coarsest food is all he is compelled to ask from the grudging world ; and that the thralldom of artificial life is a bondage he has broken.*

The habitude of positive pain, as well as that of mere privation, brings its relief also ; for there is a torpor, partly of the nerve, but chiefly of the mind, which more and more blunts physical sensibility ; and there is too an art learned in the school of chronic suffering, which teaches so to shift the burden of anguish as that it may not any where gall to the quick. Moreover there is a power of abstraction from bodily sensations, called into exercise by long experience, and which may at length, even while matter and mind continue partners, almost set the conscious principle at large from its sympathy with mere flesh and nerve. Pain, at its first onset, condenses the soul upon a point ; or brings the whole of the sensitive faculty to the one centre of anguish ; but the habit of pain loosens this concentration, and allows the mind a liberty of movement.

The eulogists of the ascetic saints often boast of

* To a naked eremite St. Bernard—*pro signo caritatis*, had sent a cloak and boots, which he kindly received ; and which, as an act of humility and obedience, he put on ; yet presently, like a true savage, laid aside as intolerable. *Et nunc*, said he, *pro amore ipsius*, vestimenta transmissa obedienter accepi, et indui ; diutius tamen ea portare non valeo, quia nec opus est mihi ; nec ipse mandavit. *Dico autem vobis*, amicis meis carissimis, quia nihil est mihi molestius quam ut curæ carnis sarcinam odiosam, cum tanta difficultate depositam, lassatis et dolentibus humeris denuo imponere cogar.

that absolute insensibility to pain, to thirst, and to hunger, to which some of their heroes had attained. In certain instances the leathern girdle—*zona pellicea*, hoc est, ex crudo corio, ad macerationem procurandam, was found, after death, to have lodged itself in the integuments around the loins ; so as, in ordinary cases, must have occasioned intense suffering : yet never had the secret been betrayed to the fraternity by any indications of uneasiness. Instances still more extreme, and far too revolting to describe, abound in the monkish records. If the facts are admitted as true—and they cannot altogether be rejected, it must be believed that a state of mental abstraction not merely diverts the *sense* of pain, but prevents also that physical excitement which ordinarily attends excruciating torture, and which wastes the animal force. We must attribute to the same influence of the mind, the power acquired by some of the hermits of northern Europe to resist the most intense cold—unclothed and unsheltered : the instances are numerous, and are too familiarly spoken of to be reasonably called in question. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the forests of France and Germany were haunted by naked anchorets who, through the year, roamed about, refusing even the comforts of a cavern, and who were wont to repose at night on the fresh fallen snow.*

* After deducting from these narratives all the miracles, the bare fact is wonderful enough ; yet these stories could not have been sheer inventions. It is difficult to choose among the abundance of examples ; and so much the more difficult, because it is rare to find one in which the venerable language of Holy Scripture is not frightfully misapplied to the follies of

When so much proficiency as this has been made by the voluntary sufferer, he gains leisure to look abroad. Conqueror, so far—of himself—of nature, and of the vindictive powers, the fanatic stalks about as a hero; and he may even begin to think how he shall turn his victory to profitable account. Vanity and ambition, when once they gain a lodgement in the heart, imperceptibly, yet quickly, sap the more imaginative and passionate emotions. This substitution of ignoble sentiments for those of a deeper sort meets us every day. In truth, the constant tendency of the human mind is from the more, to the less vehement class of emotions; and then its progress is from the simple and ardent, to the complex and turbid, in its habits of feeling. It is thus that the sincere enthusiast so often becomes, perhaps unconsciously to himself, a religious knave;

superstition. The author of the *Book de Miraculis Cisterciensium Monachorum*, thus speaks of one who, pro Christo quotidie moriens, non unam tantum, sed innumeras cruces et mortes sustinuit: quia quot diebus in eremo vixit, quasi tot martyria duxit. Annis siquidem quatuor decem solivagus ac toto corpore nudus, montibus et silvis pro Christi amore oberans et latitans perduravit, cælum habens pro tecto, aërem pro vestimento, pecorinum victum pro cibo humano. Ten years, without flinching from his purpose, the hermit had lived abroad; but at length yielded a little to the weakness of nature. Postmodum autem quatuor fere annis ante suam dormitionem, in corde hyemis, bruma sæviante asperrima, cum tellus, nivibus obruta, et gelu acriore coercita, nec herbas foris exsereret, nec radices effodi sineret; tunc facie famis et hujus frigoris sustinere non prævalens, tandem ut homo jam fere præmortuus, obeso corpore, pelle sola circumdatus, cogeatur interdum deserta deserere, atque ad proxima rura, volendo nolendo, descendere.

and thus too, that the man who commenced his course of mortification and extravagance under the impulse of genuine passions, and who, at the outset, might have been looked at with wonder, if not admiration, degenerates into the charlatan or public fool.

3d. It is not till after the fanatic has acquired some familiarity with self-inflicted tortures, and is at ease in his character of voluntary martyr, and especially until he believes himself to have reached a vantage ground in relation to Vindictive Powers, that he entertains the bold ambition of undertaking to suffer vicariously for those who may be less resolute than himself.*

* We pass by, as uninteresting, the gross examples of this kind of fanaticism that might be brought from India or Thibet, and rather adduce instances which, though milder in appearance, may well amaze us more. Let us listen to St. Bernard: *Videtur quidem et in nostris aliquando tribulationibus esse NONNULLA LIBERTAS, cum videlicet pro peccatis proximorum, libera et liberali caritate, laborem pœnitentiæ sustinemus, lugentes pro eis, jejunantes pro eis, vapulantes pro eis, et quæ non rapuimus exsolventes.*—(*De Diversis, Serm. 34, c. 3.*) Yet the pious and respectable abbot of Clairvaux was not the inventor of this doctrine; nor, on the other hand, had it reached its maturity in his time; indeed his own language is often irreconcilable with the preposterous notion of supererogatory merit. *Ubi ergo macula propria, propria quoque purgatio jure requiretur*, says he; but in the very same sermon (*de Diversis, 38,*) he leaves room for the then advancing error. *Per multas enim tribulationes in regnum Dei intrare necesse est; et nemo nisi per tribulationes ingreditur, aut proprias, aut alienas.* An indistinct belief of a transferable merit in the good works and voluntary penances of the saints, is to be traced in many of the Christian writers from the middle of the fourth century, and onward. *Sed quid mirum*, says St. Gregory (Pope,) *si ad absolutionem*

Master of a fund of supererogatory merit—how shall he dispose of it to best advantage? Can any thing be more noble than to dispense the hardly-acquired treasure among feeble souls, who are destitute of that in which he is rich? Absurdities such as this, if not now common, nevertheless have in past ages extensively prevailed, and indeed are only what may be again looked for, if we calculate the influence of certain motives upon the common principles of human nature. That law of our mental conformation has already been adverted to which makes it highly difficult, or impracticable, to kindle the imagination within the home-circle of selfish interests. The fanatic, therefore, all whose sentiments are more or less dependent upon that faculty, very soon feels a need—a craving, which not even the most egregious illusions of self-love can satisfy. He must then spread himself over a larger surface, and take up many more elements of emotion. Every mind, and especially a mind highly sensitive, seeks some object of meditation, the dimensions of which it does not exactly measure. In moments of depression, in hours of languor, we want a defence against the chilling calculations of mere reason. And the more a man's course of life is absurd, the

peccatoris propria merita suffragantur, quando in sacri eloquii auctoritate discamus, quia alii pro aliis liberati sunt? (*In I. Regum*, c. 14.) And Ambrose (*de Pœnit.* lib. i. c. 15.) Ut per universos ea quæ superflua sunt in aliquo pœnitentiam agente virilis misericordiæ aut compassionis velut collativa quadam admixtione purgentur. Or again (*Expos. Luc.* c. 5.) Si gravium peccatorum diffidis veniam, adhibe precatores, adhibe Ecclesiam quæ pro te precetur, cujus contemplatione quod tibi Dominus negare posset, ignoscat.

more urgent need has he of a store of vague unlimited motives, such as shall be, by their very eccentricity, out of danger of an assault from common sense. When the fanatic has begun to tire on his wearisome pilgrimage of woe, how may he reanimate his purpose if he can think himself a public person, who has freely become responsible for other men's salvation; and especially if he can believe that the Vindictive Powers whom he is holding at bay with a strong arm, are watching for the fall of so notable a champion, and would rush upon the spoil were he to faint!

And besides; it is only by heading-up the merit of penance to such a height as that there shall always be a large amount in store, that the public martyr can feel to be himself quite secure against the demands of justice. May not a man who is every day expiating the sins of others assume it as certain that his own are discharged? Thus the warfare against ghostly exactors is carried on upon advanced ground; and the knight-spiritual has a space in the rear to which, if pressed, he may retreat.

A striking contrast presents itself, when we compare the Mohammedan and the Popish superstitions, on the ground of the encouragement they have severally given to penitential and expiatory inflictions; for it appears that, while the former has not been exempt from extravagances of this order, they have always constituted a main element of the latter; the Romish pietism having occupied itself mainly with personal austerities. Several causes have concurred to produce this marked difference between

the religion of Asia and that of Europe. It is obvious to remark, that the oriental faith burst upon the world, full-orbed, amongst an energetic and enterprising race. It was the religion of MEN, and the faith of warriors. But the faith of the West was the slow-born creature of the austere desert and of the cloister ;—it was the religion of recluses and of priests ;—the solace of sour and mopish imbecility. The one was modelled in the youthful season of national existence ; the other grew to its shape during a course of melancholy ages, which saw the human mind fall back from the high position it once had occupied, to the point of extreme depression.

Yet, in the instance of the Jewish people, a different doctrine of penitential infliction has sprung from intellectual and moral degradation. Nothing can be much more absurd or ludicrous than are the Rabbinical penances. It is hard to believe that the mortification, or the abstinence, or the punishment, was ever thought of, either by those who issued the injunction, or by those who listened to it, otherwise than as an acknowledged mockery. The modern children of Abraham, suffering as they have done, in almost every age and country, substantial miseries of a kind that might well be reckoned to supersede any voluntary pains, and yet not deeming their theology complete without penances, have taken care to impose upon themselves such only as were too severe to be put in practice ; or such as were penal only in name. Besides ; the Rabbinical Judaism, with its lumber of frivolous traditions, has left no room for the working of those profounder sentiments

whence the monkish austerities drew their motives. The religion of the modern Jew, what is it but a ponderous vanity? That bundle of "beggarly elements" which he bears about upon his shoulders, allows him not that liberty of emotion which men of other creeds enjoy, and which the fanatic of any creed must possess.*

* Maimonides saw in Egypt enough of the follies and horrors of monkery to sicken him of religious austerities. On this subject he speaks like a man of sense, and in a strain of which, alas, we find few instances among the Christian writers of the time. He condemns as positively sinful, all voluntary inflictions, not directly enjoined by the law (see *Bernard's Selections from the Yad Hachazakah*, p. 170, and the entire chapter). The doctrine of Repentance, as we find it in this writer, might with advantage to the Jew be compared with the Romish doctrine on the same point, from the age of Pope Gregory I. to the present day. His rule of confession (p. 222) is incomparably more sound than that of the doctors of the church. But Maimonides must not be taken as a sample of Rabbinical instruction: he boldly appealed to Moses and the prophets: the Rabbis issued nothing which they did not first deform and render absurd. Qui, &c.

. . . . diebusque æstivis accedat ad locum plenum formicarum, inter quas nudus sedeat. Diebus vero hybernis, frangat glaciem, et in aquis sedeat usque ad nares. Qui, &c. sedeatque in aquis diebus hybernis, quantum temporis requiritur ad coquendum ovum. Qui, &c. . . . jejundet quadraginta dies continuos, atque singulis diebus vapulet bis, aut ter. Qui, &c. sedeat in nive et gelu per horam unam singulis diebus; sic faciat per totam hyemem quotidie semel, aut bis. Diebus vero æstivis objiciat se muscis, sive vespis et apibus; aliasve pœnas subeat morti similes. That these penances were matters of form only one might infer from the fact that a forty days' fast is enjoined upon whosoever exacts usury (interest) and that the taking of interest even from the Gentiles is reprobated! See the book called *Reschit Cochma*, as quoted by the annotator in Raimond Martin's *Pugio Fidei*. It is curious to observe

But to return to Mohammed, and to mention specific causes, it must be noted that the Arabian teacher, by means of his prominent doctrine of the merit of military service undertaken for the propagation of the faith, and by the large and attractive rewards promised to pious valour, appropriated, to the enterprises of active life, all those springs of action which, when left to pend upon the conscience, impel men to inflict upon themselves expiatory torments. Beings of the very same native temperament who, in Christian countries, clad themselves in hair-cloth, and mercilessly twanged the scourge over their own shoulders, put on, in the East, the caparison of war, and wielded the cimeter, and this because the Koran offers paradise to those who die in battle.*

A subsidiary means of diverting the fanaticism of personal austerity was also the importance attached by Mohammed to alms-giving—almost the only positive virtue of his system. The aspirant to immortal sensualities could not indeed every day wet that the practice of penance has never comported with the sentiments and habits of a trading people.

* Verily God hath purchased of the true believers their souls and their substance, promising them the enjoyment of paradise on condition that they fight for the cause of God; whether they slay or be slain, the promise for the same is assuredly due by the law, the gospel, and the Koran. And who performeth his contract more faithfully than God? When ye encounter the unbelievers strike off their heads until ye have made a great slaughter among them, and bind them in bonds. . . . And as to those who fight in defence of God's true religion, God will not suffer their works to perish: he will guide them and will dispose their heart aright, and he will lead them into paradise, of which he hath told them. *Sale's Koran*, c. 9 and 27.

his sword in the blood of infidels ; but he might at all times *purchase*, if not always *conquer*, for himself the future pleasures. Or if the system still seemed to want a vent for those feelings which gave rise to ascetic practices, it was found in the rigour and universal obligation of the annual fast, which afforded to every Moslem such a taste of mortification as might effectively cool the ambition of voluntary hunger. The frantic austerities of the Dervish did not spring out of the Mohammedan theology ; but either grew upon it ; or have been merely farcical and mercenary ; or they have been practised in continuation of usages which the faith of the Prophet did not extirpate.*

The Romish superstition embraced many more elements of meditative emotion, and those of a more profound sort than were included in the Koran. Although, if we are to speak of it as a whole, and especially if we have in view its condition in the eighth and ninth centuries, Popery was a more corrupt system than that of the Arabian prophet, so that Mohammed and the Caliphs might claim to be spoken of as religious reformers ; yet did it retain

* Sooffeeism with its varieties, is a far more ancient and a more widely spread system than the doctrine of the prophet. The philosophic pantheist of Persia and Upper India, the frantic fakir, and the dervish, are personages of all times, and of almost all countries. The ascetic tribe is older than history, and presents the same general features wherever we meet with it. In reading Arrian's account of the Brahmins, or Sophists, as he calls them, of India, one might believe he was describing so many Romish saints. Οἱτοὶ γυμνοὶ διατῶνται οἱ σοφισταί. (*Indian Hist.*) The Koran neither created nor cherished infatuations of this kind.

those potent principles of hope and fear—of remorse and compunction, of tenderness too, and of sensibility, which put the soul into the deepest commotion, and set it working upon itself. On the contrary, Mohammed, by admitting into his theology the expectation of a sensual paradise, the pleasures of which were not to differ from those of an oriental palace, effectively banished from his system every pure and spiritual conception of virtue.* For if the heaven which a man is thinking of as his last home, be grossly voluptuous, of what avail will be the precepts, or the axioms, or the grave discourses, that are to teach him purity?

No error like this ever gained ground among Christian nations, even in their lowest state of religious degradation; and as some spiritual conceptions of the Divine character, as well as some notion of the sanctity of the upper world were still prevalent, the correspondent belief of the guilt and danger of man as a sinner retained its force. Nevertheless as, at the same time, the evangelic scheme for the remission of sins was nullified, or forgotten, the tormented conscience was left to contend, as it could, with the dread of future retribution.

The doctrine of Purgatory sprang up naturally in the bosoms of men from this conflict of fear and

* The contemplative or more refined class of Moslems have strenuously endeavoured to put a figurative construction upon those passages of the Koran which describe Paradise, maintaining that the prophet never intended them to be literally understood. The mass of his followers have taken things as they found them.

conscious guilt, with the obscure hope of impunity ; and although the “fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture,” may be traced in its elements to a very early time, and although it became at length, in its practical bearing, a device well adapted to serve the purposes of a rapacious priesthood, it should be regarded, in its essence, as nothing more than the proper product of elevated and spiritual notions of virtue, cut off from that solace which the gospel affords. Some opinion equivalent to the doctrine of purgatory, has been seen, even in our own times, to be associated with the two conditions, namely a damaged Gospel, and a severe morality.

It belongs to another subject, namely—*SUPERSTITION*, to trace the origin and growth of the doctrine of Purgatory. This ancient, and widely diffused dogma went hand in hand with that which led to the invocation of saints, and the belief of their intercession in the court of heaven. The latter doctrine seems to have been ripened, or to have reached a definite form rather earlier than the former ; nor is the mode of its birth quite so obscure. When at length both had become the accredited doctrine of the church, a brisk commerce between the visible and invisible worlds was carried on ; and in this traffic the clergy were the brokers and the gainers—gainers to an incalculable amount.*

* Not only the doctrine of Purgatory, but its practical abuses stand forth almost in the grossest form in the writings of Gregory the Great ; and it would be hard to choose between the faith of the Christian Pope, on this subject, and that of his contemporary—Mohammed ; both announcing eternal dam-

The idea of future expiatory torments having lodged itself firmly in serious and devout minds, no other consequence could be looked for, but the

nation as the doom of the uninstructed mass of mankind; and both preaching a purgatorial state to those whose religious advantages were of the highest kind. Assuredly the Koran is more free from suspicion of a sinister purpose on this point than are the Dialogues of Gregory: if indeed these dialogues can be trusted to as the unaltered productions of the writer to whom they are attributed; or are his productions at all—a point deemed questionable.

A service might perhaps be rendered to sincere and candid Romanists if the history of this doctrine—so capital an article in their belief, and one which they know to be of high antiquity, could be satisfactorily traced. Our materials, it is to be feared, are too scanty to sustain the inquiry in all its links; for between the close of the apostolic age and the time of Cyprian or Tertullian, more is wanted than actually exists to enable us to give a good account of the state of opinion as we find it in the third century. The expression, so often quoted by the Romanists, from Tertullian,—*Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis annua die facimus (de Corona)* may not be, of itself, conclusive; but it becomes so as compared with other passages. *Dic mihi soror, in pace præmisisti virum tuum? Quid respondebit? An in discordia? Ergo hoc magis ei vineta est, cum quo habet apud Deum causam. . . . Enimvero et pro anima ejus orat, et refrigerium interim adpostulat ei, et in prima resurrectione consortium, et offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus. (De Monogam.)* Every one has seen quotations to the same effect from Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem and others. But in these, and similar instances, the true import of certain phrases is to be gathered from each writer's general strain on those topics which are most nearly allied to the opinion in question: especially on the subject of repentance and remission of sins. The doctrine of purgatory, it is pretty evident, sprang out of an early corruption of those principal articles. Here we find a confusion of notions, and a perverted exposition of Scripture, in almost the earliest of the Christian writers.

practice of penitentiary inflictions, having for their motive the hope of abating the demands of justice in the region of chastisement. The most excessive abstinence, a shirt of hair cloth, a bed of straw, continued watchings, perpetual silence, sanguinary flagellations, and positive tortures, were willingly resorted to as assuagements of the dread which the belief of purgatory inspired ; and if we are to wonder at all in looking at these severities, our amazement must be, not that men could be found who were willing to submit heartily and permanently to the rule of St. Benedict, or St. Dominic ; but rather that the miseries of the monastic life were not carried to a much greater extent than we actually find them ordinarily to have reached. It would not have seemed strange if sincere believers in the doctrine of purgatory had gone the length of the ancient worshippers of Baal, or of the modern devotees of Indian divinities.*

It is in the glare of a doctrine such as this that we should peruse the rules of the ascetic life, and the

* The Romish writers use no reserve in describing the pains of the purgatorial state ; and as they have, in the doctrine itself, supplied to the church an article on which Scripture is silent ; so, in furnishing the particulars, have they drawn largely upon that knowledge of the infernal regions which their privileged commerce with invisibles has supplied. "A soul," says the Rev. Alban Butler, "for one venial sin shall suffer more than all the pains of distempers, the most violent colics, gout, and stone, joined in complication ; more than all the most cruel torments undergone by malefactors, or invented by the most barbarous tyrants ; more than all the tortures of the martyrs summed up together. This is the idea which the fathers give us of purgatory, and how long many souls may have to suffer there we know not."—*Lives of the Saints*, Novem. 2.

blood-stained story of the monastery. Is it any wonder that men who tortured themselves at the instigation of this belief, should think it a light matter to ply the rack and the brand upon others? The fanaticism of austerity was the proper parent of the fanaticism of cruelty. But the mild and meditative spirit of Christianity happily came in to moderate, in some degree, that extravagance into which the human mind naturally runs, when highly excited by a ferocious theology. The Christian flagellist might, it is probable, draw as much blood from his back in a year, as did the frantic priest of Moloch from his sides and arms; or perhaps more; but yet it were better done with the Scourge than with the Knife. The Romish fanaticism did not rise to a horrid and murderous pitch until after it had become the instrument of sacerdotal rancour, and had been directed against the heretic.

The derivation of fanatical cruelty from fanatical austerity, it is by no means difficult to trace; nor is the line of descent far extended. Often indeed has the one generated the other in the same bosom; or if the history of the Church be looked to, it will be seen that, within the circuit of a century, or more, those outrages upon human nature which had been going on in the cells of the monastery, and those preposterous sentiments which the ascetic life enkindled, reached their consummation when the friar and the inquisitor undertook to rid the Church of her enemies. Far was any such consequence from the minds of the earliest promoters of the monastic system; but although not foreseen by them, it demands to be attentively regarded by us, since the

instruction which history conveys is drawn from considering, rather the commencements than the issues, rather the germs than the fruits, of whatever excites admiration or surprise upon the stage of the world's affairs.

And so, if it be intended to gather those lessons of practical wisdom which spring from the contemplation of individual character, we must select as specimens, not the most distorted instances; but those, rather, wherein the peculiar tendency we have in view is moderated by fine qualities of the heart, or is lost almost amid the splendour of rare mental powers and accomplishments. For inasmuch as it is only when so recommended that spurious virtues produce extensive ill effects, our caution against the evil should be drawn from examples of that very order. Let the sardonic historian, whose rule it is to exhibit human nature always as an object of mockery, crowd his pages with whatever is the most absurd in its kind. A better motive will lead us to bring forward the worthiest exemplars; and yet not as if the illustrious dead were to be exhibited that it might be said of them—How little were the great! but rather that the admonition, of whatever kind, which the instance presents, may come with the fullest force.

Forgetting then the frenzied anchorets of the Egyptian deserts, and of the rocks of Sinai, and of the solitudes of Syria, and leaving unnamed the savage heroes of the Romish calendar,* let us take an instance in which a due admiration of great

* No literary enterprise can well be named, or perhaps thought of, more undesirable—more humiliating—at least if a man retains any feeling of self-respect, than that which the learned

qualities must mingle with our reprobation of very mischievous sentiments. Instead of a St. Symeon, or a St. Columban, we turn to Basil—the primate of Cappadocia.*

But how obtain the simple truth in the instance we have chosen? Nothing belonging to that age

author of the *Lives of the Saints* has executed.—The Romish Church is rich in the virtues, or the reputation, of upwards of a thousand saints—a number so large that she is able to allot as many as three or four glorious patrons, on an average, to each day of the year! Now most men would think it a formidable task to undertake merely a cold apology for *every one* of any thousand frail human beings that could be brought together in a list. But what must it be, not simply to excuse, but to commend every one of a thousand? And what, not only to commend, but to find proof that every one is a fit object of adoration, and an efficacious mediator between God and man! Yet such is the achievement that signalizes the name of Alban Butler! A thousand saints, one after another, to be hoisted upon the pedestal of canonization, or to be defended there! Truly one of the loftiest of these enviable standing-places should be reserved for the author himself! Those who, without a cause to serve, or a Church to prop (or to pull down) look calmly at human nature as it is, and who read history for themselves, will, with a sort of mournful contempt bring into comparison the foolish exaggerations of Butler, on the one hand, and the malign misrepresentations of Gibbon on the other; and will learn to hold very cheap, as well eulogists as calumniators, when it is Truth we are in search of.

* Let ninety-nine of every hundred of the Saints of the Calendar retain their title. If the Romanists please, it shall be *Saint George*, *Saint Dunstan*, *Saint Dominic*, and so forth; but we are disposed to withhold the sullied honour from the few whom we believe, notwithstanding the misfortune of their canonization, to have been good men, and sincere Christians. And we are willing so to think of Basil of Cappadocia. He governed the churches of that province rather more than eight years, during the reigns of Valentinian and Valens.

in which the Church ascended to the place of worldly greatness is to be found in its native form, and its real colours. Flattery and clerical arrogance confound all distinctions, violate all modesty ; and, in the interested idolatry of human excellence, commit frightful outrages upon the just rules of piety. Those calumniators of his friend and patron against whom Gregory Nazianzen inveighs,* could not have injured the true fame of Basil so fatally as himself has done by his hyperbolic encomiums. We turn, as well with suspicion as disgust, from the turgid oration,† and are fain to relinquish the attempt to rescue a good and accomplished man from the suffocating embrace of his eulogist. Well might a warning be taken by the Church, even now, against the danger of indulging the spirit of exaggeration, and of fond adulatory regard to the illustrious dead. It was this very spirit, as much as any other influence we can name, which effected the ruin of early

* See this father's funeral oration in praise of Basil, Morell's. Greg. Nazianzen, 1680, tom. i. pp. 360, 363.

† The twentieth oration, already referred to—*ἐπιτάφιος*, in which Gregory exhausts the powers of language in the service of his deceased friend and spiritual father ; upon whom indeed, while living, he lavished the hyperbolas of praise ; as in the sixth, seventh, and nineteenth orations, and in various places of his Epistles. Could the simplicity of the Gospel, and the honour of Christ, comport with that style of adulation which, in the age of Gregory, was accredited and common in the Church ? The epistle—the nineteenth, in which he excuses himself from the charge of neglecting his friend, would astound the modern reader. No wonder that those should have fallen into an idolatry of the saints in heaven, who had already gone so far in worshipping one another !

Christianity ; and hence sprang some of the worst errors which, in a matured state, strengthened the despotism of Rome, and rendered its services idolatrous, and its practices abominable.

A reasonable distaste of the inflation which offends the eye so often on the pages of the early Christian writers, not to mention motives of indolence or levity, has almost cut us off from correspondence with the worthies of the ancient Church ; so that men whose vigour of mind, and whose copious eloquence, and learning, should attract us to the perusal of their works, are little more thought of than the heroes of the Grecian mythology. Yet undoubtedly by this oblivion we not only forfeit the advantage of justly estimating things that are, by comparison with things that have been ; but fail of securing that important benefit which an exact knowledge of history conveys, namely, a timely caution against the first inroads of insidious errors, and spurious sentiments.

It may be too much to affirm that even Basil, eminent as were his qualities, or indeed that any single mind could have turned the tide which, at the opening of the fourth century, was in full course, bearing the Christian world, eastern and western, fast toward that swamp of superstition wherein all its virtues were soon after lost. Yet it is certain, that although he might not have had power to divert the course of things, his influence was great and extensive in accelerating the unhappy movement. As well in the Latin, as the Greek Church, and during many successive centuries, the writings of Basil formed the text book of monkery, and gave

sanction to its follies.* His friend and biographer, Gregory Nazianzen, assures us, and his own writings attest the fact, that, not like many who so long as their private interests go well, trouble themselves not at all on account of the evils prevailing abroad, Basil anxiously occupied himself with whatever concerned the welfare of the Christian community throughout the world:† and seeing the Church

* The praises of Basil, and of his institutions are on the lips of most of the contemporary and succeeding church writers, as well Latins as Greeks; and many of the oriental monkish establishments were founded upon the model of which he was the author. Isidore, (Lib. I. Epist. 61,) reproaches one who, while he professed high regard to the words of our DIVINELY INSPIRED FATHER—Basil, practically set his authority at naught. Equivalent expressions are employed by other writers. By a strange catachresis the monastic rule was called, generally, by the writers of that age (as by Isidore in the epistle here referred to) *κανὼν φιλοσοφίας*, and the institution itself the “true and divine philosophy.” A fond and frequent use of this phrase distinguishes the epistles of Gregory Nazianzen.

† . . . ἀλλ’ ὑποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν διάρας, καὶ κύκλω τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα περιαγαγὼν, πᾶσαν εἴσω ποιεῖται τὴν οἰκουμένην, ὅσῃν ὁ σωτήριος λόγος ἐπέδραμεν. Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. His assertion is borne out by several passages in Basil’s own writings, from which it appears that the state of the Church universal was the subject of his frequent, and not very happy, meditations: for instance, in his treatise on the Holy Spirit, c. 30, where, with admirable force of language and vigour of conception, he makes a comparison between the distracted state of the Church, and a sea-fight during a storm: or again in that remarkable epistle to the bishops of the West, in which he entreats them to send delegates to the eastern church, who might raise it from the dust. The same catholic and patriarchal solicitude appears in his epistles to Athanasius, and in those of similar import, to the bishops of Gaul and Italy. Basil’s monasticism did not at all seclude him from public interests.

“split into ten thousand sects, and distracted with errors,”* laboured, as well by his writings as by personal interposition, to remedy the existing evils. Nor were his labours altogether without fruit. The specific heresies with which he contended were held in check by his eloquence, and by the weight of his personal character. False dogmas he discerned, and refuted ; but alas, the false temper of the times, the universal wrong tendency of men’s notions of religion and piety, this he did not discern; on the contrary, while fighting with errors in the detail, himself mightily promoted the grand error which had already poisoned the Church, and which, after a century or two, laid her prostrate as a corrupting carcase. So it is that what is special we can see ; while what is general escapes our notice. A hundred times, while following Basil through his track of cogent argument and splendid illustration, one stops to ask—Why did not so comprehensive and penetrating an intelligence question itself and question the Christian body concerning the soundness of its first principles of practical piety ? Why not inquire—Whether a system of conduct manifestly at variance with the course of nature, and with the constitutions of the social economy, had indeed been enjoined by Scripture, or could, in its issue, be safe and advantageous ? Scarcely a surmise of this sort, so far as we can find, ever disturbed the meditations of the Cappadocian primate ! And yet those only may fairly blame and wonder who themselves are habituated to entertain severe inquiries concerning the opinions and usages they most zealously affect.

* . . . εἰς τε μυρίας δόξας καὶ πλάγους διεσπασμένον.

Far from seeming fanatical or malignant, the monastic system, as it stands forth on the shining pages of Basil, bears quite a seductive form. His descriptions of his own seclusion among the mountains of Pontus, and of the pleasures of abstracted meditation and holy exercise, can hardly be read without kindling an enthusiasm of the same order. It was customary with the monks of a later age to select for the site of their establishments the most horrid and pestilential swamps, and this professedly with the intention of mortifying the senses, and of rendering life as undesirable, and as brief too as possible. Not so Basil: fully alive to the beauties of nature, he exults in his enjoyment of them. Addressing the friend of his youth, Basil says—"In Pontus God hath shewn me a spot precisely suited to my turn of mind and habits.—In truth it is the very scene which heretofore, while idly musing, I had been wont to picture to myself. It is a lofty mountain, enveloped in dense forests; on its northern front it is watered by gelid streams that sparkle to the eye as they descend. At the foot of the hill a grassy plain spreads itself out, and luxuriates in the moisture that distils perpetually from the heights. Around the level space the woods, presenting trees of every species, take an easy sweep, so as to form a natural rampart. Calypso's isle, so much praised by Homer, one might condemn in comparison with this spot: in fact itself might almost be called an island, since it is completely encircled and shut in—on two sides, by deep and precipitous ravines; on another, by the fall of a never-failing torrent, not easily forded, and which like a wall

excludes intruders. In the rear the jagged and uneven heights, with a semicircular turn, rise from the skirts of the plain, and deny access, except through a single pass, of which we are masters. My habitation occupies the ridge of a towering height, whence the landscape, with the many bends of the river, spreads itself fairly to the view, and presents, altogether, a prospect not inferior, as I think, in gay attractions, to that which is offered by the course of the river Strymon, as seen from Amphipolis. That stream indeed moves so sluggishly in its bed, as hardly to deserve the name of river; but this, on the contrary, the most rapid I have ever seen, rushes on to a neighbouring rock, whence thrown off, it tumbles into a deep vortex in a manner that excites the admiration of every beholder. From the reservoir thus formed we are abundantly supplied with water; nor only so, for it nourishes in its stormy bosom a multitude of fishes. What might I not say of the balmy exhalations that arise from this verdant region, or of the breezes that attend the flow of the river? or some perhaps would rather speak of the endless variety of flowers that adorn the ground, or of the innumerable singing birds that make our woods their home. For my own part, my mind is too deeply engaged to give much attention to these lesser matters. To our commendation of this seclusion we are moreover able to add the praise of an unbounded fruitfulness in all kinds of produce, favoured as it is by its position and soil. To me its principal charm, and a greater cannot be, is this—that it yields me the fruits of tranquillity. For not only is the region far remote from the tumult of

cities, but it is actually unfrequented by travellers of any sort, a few huntsmen excepted, who make their way hither in search of the game which abounds in it. This indeed is another of its advantages ; for though we lack the ferocious bear and the wolf that afflict your country, we have deer and goats, sylvan flocks, and hares, and other animals of the sort." . .

Who would not turn monk if he might lead the "angelic life" in a paradise such as that of Basil ?

In the ascetic rules of this Father, there is very much of admirable and elevated sentiment, and of scriptural discretion ; as well as a thorough orthodoxy. More easy is it to yield the heart and judgment to the persuasive influence of the writer, than to stand aloof, and call in question his principles !

Nor perhaps, apart from that comment which the after-history of the Church has made upon those principles, would it have been easy to demonstrate their pernicious tendency ; and yet there is little or nothing among the enormities of the ascetic life which might not be justified on the grounds assumed by Basil : as for example—That the domestic constitution of man is abstractedly imperfect, and irreconcilable with high attainments in piety :—That Religion, or at least that the only admirable order of religion, consists, not in the worthy and fruitful exercise of virtuous principles amid the occasions and trials of common life ; but in cutting off all opportunities of their exercise, and in retreating from every trial of constancy :—That, in a word, piety is a something in every sense foreign to the present state, and which can flourish only in pro-

portion as its laws and constitutions are contemned and discarded. Throughout the ascetic writings of Basil every thing commendable or desirable in the spiritual economy is assumed to attach exclusively to that mode of life which could be followed only in the monastery ; nor does he think it practicable to maintain faith and virtue in the open world, or while encompassed with the cares and duties—*τοῦ κοινοῦ βίου*. Not so Paul and Peter. In a letter to his friend Gregory Nazianzen, after describing the distractions of ordinary life, and the cares of matrimony, he says—"From all which there is only one way of escape—namely, an entire separation from this world :—not indeed a being absent from it corporeally ; but a rending of the soul from every bodily affection ;—to be no citizen—to have no home—no property—no friends—to be destitute, and in absolute want—to have no concerns or occupation—to be cut off from commerce with the world—to be ignorant of human learning ;—and so to prepare the heart for the due reception of the divine instructions." Such were the principles which this good man diffused throughout the Christian world—Himself did by no means carry them out fully into practice—this part was left for his admirers. So it is that great minds indulge in exaggerations, which small minds interpret literally, to their cost.

The first practical measure necessary for giving effect to maxims such as these, was of course that of breaking up the conjugal economy, and of gathering men and women—destined by God for each other as sharers in the joys of life, and helpers in its labours and sorrows, into horrid fraternities, and

comfortless sisterhoods of virginity.* This violence once done to nature, and then every lesser enormity was only a proper consequence, and a consistent part of the monstrous invention. All fanaticism, all cruelties, all impurities, were in embryo within this egg. Strange does it seem, or strange to us of this age, that the authors and promoters of the unnatural usage, while reading the evangelic records, did not see that the virtue of our Lord and of his Apostles, if we are not to think it quite inferior to that of which the monks made their boast, was altogether unlike it, and must have been founded on different maxims. Of our Lord it is said that he was continually accompanied in his journeys by women who “ministered unto him.” But the doctors of monkery assure us that the society of woman is altogether pernicious, and is wholly incompatible with advancement in the Christian life ; yes, that the mere touch of a female hand is mortal to sanctity !† The sanctity of the

* The author of the *Lives of the Saints* would fain rid the reputation of St. Basil of the ambiguous honour of having written the tract on Virginity. If there be a doubt on this point, we will assuredly give the Archbishop, and the *Monk* of Cæsarea, the benefit of it. Whether it be his or not, the doctrine it maintains is in substance, though not in so unpleasing a form, found in his unquestioned writings.

† We turn for a moment from Basil, who nevertheless is strong on this point. “So far as possible,” says Isidore, “all converse with women is to be shunned :—or if this cannot altogether be avoided, they should be spoken with only, the eye fixed on the earth. . . . In the case of almost all who have fallen by their means, *death hath entered in by the windows* !” Lib. I. Epis. 67. Cassian, and still more, his commentators, might be quoted at large on matters of this sort. Gregory the Great says—*Qui corpus suum continentię dedicant, habitare cum feminis non*

monk then, and the purity of the Son of God had not, it is manifest, any kindred elements. Of the Apostles and first disciples it is said that they con-sorted together “with the women ;” and throughout the history of the Acts nothing appears to have attached to the manners of Christians that was at variance with the genuine simplicity and innocence which is characteristic of a virtuous intercourse of the sexes. The “angelic life,” described and lauded by every Father, from Cyprian, to the Abbot of Clairvaux, is nowhere to be traced in the authentic story of the first years of the Christian Institution. But why was not a fact so conspicuous perceived by Chrysostom, by Gregory, by Basil ? Alas ! such is the limitation, or such the infatuation of the human mind, that, when once it takes a wrong path, not the most eminent powers of reason, nor the most extensive accomplishments, avail to give it a suspicion of its error !

All that could be done by a vigorous and comprehensive mind, furnished with scriptural principles, to render the monastic institute as good as its nature admitted, was actually effected by Basil ; and his ascetic writings—his Rules, the

presumant ; and he tells a long story to enforce his advice. Dialog. Lib. III. c. 7. Sulpitius Severus thinks it necessary to excuse his hero, St. Martin, in an instance in which he had suffered the touch of a woman ; and in the same spirit a monkish writer says—

Causa gravis scelerum cessabit amor mulierum,
Colloquium quarum nil est nisi virus amarum
Præbens, sub mellis dulcedine, pocula fellis.

Carmen Paræneticum.

longer and the shorter, and his Monastic Constitutions, if they could be purged of their asceticism, might form an excellent body of instructions in the practice of piety. Yet our time and labour might be better spent. Happily the principles and maxims of religion we can draw from purer sources; and while it is unquestionably incumbent upon the few who aspire to exercise a correct judgment concerning the various phases of Christianity, to make themselves familiarly conversant with the voluminous remains of ecclesiastical literature, it is certain that the private Christian, with the Bible, and with modern expositions in his hand, need not sigh that those treasures are locked up from his use.

In its rancorous stage, the fanaticism of austerity is not to be looked for in a writer so great and good as the bishop of Cæsarea. For instances of this we must turn to some of his contemporaries of less note; and to those who afterwards followed in the same track. Nevertheless the germs of malignant religionism are not wanting even in Basil. It is evident, for example, that the very serious impressions he entertained of the Divine Justice, and its bearing upon man, were not balanced, as in the minds of the Apostles, by a clear and auspicious understanding of the great article of justification by faith: his faith therefore was comfortless, severe, and dim.* Again, the scriptural belief of the

* The disorders, the corruption, and the religious feuds of the age had evidently affected the mind of Basil in a manner not favourable to his dispositions. A genuine lover of solitude, he was a passionate admirer of Ideal Perfection, and turned with alarm and distaste, as well from the church as the world, in the

agency and malice of infernal spirits, had become in that age, and before it, so turgid and extravagant that it filled a far larger space on the circle of vision than properly belongs to it. In truth, among the monks, the subject of infernal seduction quite occupied the mind, to the exclusion almost of every happier object of meditation. The devil, whatever may be the title of the piece, is the real hero of the drama of monastic piety : that piety therefore has all the characteristics of superstition.*

Furthermore, the broad distinction made between what was insolently termed "the common life," and the "angelic," or monastic, and upon which Basil so much insists, could not fail to generate, as in fact

actual state of both. Yet his was a mind of the *governing class*. From public interests he could not refrain ;—not his paradise in the depth of the wilderness could hold him, when a sphere of power opened itself before him ; but he ascended the archiepiscopal throne, an anchorite in heart, more even than in discipline and garb ;—might we say—an anchorite by imaginative taste ? We regard his ascetic writings as the product of the original incongruities of his character : seated in the place of power, he aimed not so much to govern the church secular and actual—and as a Latin would have done, as to create or to mould a celestial community that should yield itself fully to his plastic hand.

* At a very early time the belief of Christians, and especially of the monks, concerning infernal agency, had assumed a form from which nothing could follow but the follies and the horrors of superstition. A far extended and exact inquiry would be needed to place this subject in a just light. Though intimately connected with the rise and maturity of Fanaticism, it is too copious a theme to be entered upon in this volume.—It demands, however, to be fully considered, if we would obtain a comprehensive and satisfactory understanding of the early corruption of Christianity.

it did, a supercilious disdain of the mass—not of mankind at large merely, but of the christian community; and with it, a preposterous conceit—ill concealed beneath the cant of humility, of peculiar privilege and celestial dignity, as the distinction of a few. Thus was it that all the stones of the foundation of the pandemonium of pride, impurity, and cruelty, were laid by the hands of men whom still we must venerate and admire.

The most benign in its elements, and yet perhaps the most destructive in its actual consequences of all the forms of fanaticism (under this general head) remains to be mentioned; we mean the custom of pilgrimage. What enterprise can seem more innocent than that of a journey to gratify the tranquil yearnings of pious affection toward a sacred spot? but what usage more fatal, if we look at its products through a course of ages? Well may it be questioned whether the most ferocious of the ancient superstitions ever made such havoc of human life as did the tranquil pilgrimages of the eastern and western nations. Even the merciless military executions perpetrated by zealot kings upon their own subjects—at the instigation of friar-confessors, have probably not caused more death and misery than pilgrimage has occasioned. The reader might startle perhaps to hear it affirmed that, looking only to modern times, the wars that have raged in different parts of Europe and Asia have not wasted the human species to a greater amount than the noiseless processions that, during the same era, have been streaming toward the centres of Braminical, Moham-medan, and Romish superstition!

Travel by sea and land, and the latter not less than the former, does indeed include a hundred chances of death unknown to the resident portion of mankind. But journeys prompted by motives of religion seem to invite and concentrate every ill chance that can belong to a passage from country to country. Among the many routes beaten by the foot of man, which catch the eye as we look abroad over the earth's surface, if there be one that stares out from the landscape whitened with bones, we shall always find it terminate at some holy shrine! A spot made important by nothing but the dreams of superstition, has become, by the accumulated mortality of ages, the very Golgotha of a continent; and Death has fitly erected his proudest trophies on the paths that have led to the place of a sepulchre!

Besides other, and incidental reasons of the difference, it is enough to say that, while men are engaged in mercantile adventure simply, and are acting upon the common inducements of worldly interest, they naturally foresee dangers, and provide against them. But the train of pilgrimage, at first mustered by Folly, has renounced as an impiety the guidance of reason, and hurrying onward, every day with a more desperate haste than before, has at length poured itself as a torrent along the very valley of death!

It is hard to conjecture to what extent the mischief might have reached, especially in those ages when the frenzy was at its height, if it had not been checked by the saving admixture of grosser motives with the pure fanaticism which was its prime impulse. How greatly are we often indebted, if pride would but

own it, to those whispered suggestions of common prudence which we should indignantly spurn if they dared to utter themselves aloud ! And it is true that in the wondrous complexity of human nature, provisions are made for clogging or diverting every power that tends to run up to a dangerous velocity. Religious delusion is in fact found to coalesce readily, on the one side with soft sensualities, and on the other—strange amalgam ! with mercenary calculations. Oftener than can be told has pious heroism slid down by a rapid descent into sordid hypocrisy, and the stalking devotee of yesterday has become to-day, a sheer knave. So does a torrent tumble from crag to crag of the mountains, and sparkle in the sun as it storms along ; until, reaching a level, and a slimy bed, it takes up the impurity it finds ; gets sluggish as well as foul ; and at length creeps silent through the oozy channels of a swamp.

The wan pilgrim—shall we call him devotee or pedlar ? who left his home, warm with a genuine fervour, discovered as he went, unluckily for his reputation, the secret of profitable adventure. Become dealer, either in articles of vulgar merchandise,* or, still better, in the inestimable ware of superstition—rags, bones, pebbles, splinters, he took his course, barely knowing at length of what sort his errand was ; but actually reached his home a wealthy trader, who had gone forth a crazy mendicant. The important effect however of a transmutation of motives such as this, was to impart caution and forethought to the pilgrim enterprise ; for it is a singular inconsistency of human nature that men will

* See Robertson's Disquisition on India, Sect. 3.

ordinarily take much more care of life for the sake of goods and property, than they will do of life by itself. Apart from these mitigations, pilgrimage, during certain eras, might almost have swallowed up the human race in the countries where chiefly the madness raged.*

A portion only of this system of religious vagrancy belongs to our immediate subject; for it is very far from being true that all pilgrims have been fanatics. Some, as we have said, should be reckoned mere traders, or hucksters under pretext of religion; just as valiant knights were often freebooters under the same guise. Some, we cannot doubt, have been instigated mainly by that taste for adventure and love of roving which, in certain bosoms, is an irresistible impulse. Some, moreover, and not a few, have been flogged on, through their weary way, by superstitious terrors, or by a well-founded dread of the future retribution of their enormous crimes. And

* It was not merely as vendors of relics, or of the productions of the east, that the pilgrims found the means of refunding the expenses of their journey; for it appears to have been customary for them on their way home to perform sacred dramas in the streets and squares of the towns through which they passed. Ceux, says a French writer, qui revenoient de Jerusalem et de la Terre Sainte, &c. . . . composoient des cantiques sur leurs voyages, y méloient le récit de la vie et de la mort du Fils de Dieu, ou du Jugement dernier, d'une manière grossière, mais que le chant et la simplicité de ces temps-là sembloient rendre pathétique. . . . Ces Pèlerins qui alloient par troupes, et qui s'arrétoient dans les rues et dans les places publiques où ils chantoient, le bourdon à la main, le chapeau et le mantelet chargez de coquilles et d'images peintes de diverses couleurs, faisoient une espèce de spectacle qui plut. . . .

lastly, we must except those (perhaps not many) whose motive may have been only a mild poetic enthusiasm, wholly free, as well from virulence as gloomy fear, and not very difficult to be conceived of by any who are themselves at all open to imaginative sentiments, and who will surrender the fancy awhile to the seductive ideas that are called up by long meditation of a distant and hallowed region.*

There was a time—long gone by, when the streams of pilgrimage—if the anachronism of the phrase may be pardoned, flowed from all points around the Mediterranean toward the principal centres of philosophy, or of legislative science. First India, or Chaldea, then Egypt, then Greece, drew from all lands the votaries of wisdom. Marvellously must the love of pure wisdom have declined since those ages! unless indeed we grant that wisdom has become the produce of all climates. More nearly analogous to the pilgrimages of later times, though still very unlike them, was that widely-extended practice which every year brought multitudes of the Greeks of all the settlements, even the most remote, and not a few of the still more distant barbarians, to the oracular temples of the mother country, or to those of Ionia and Æolia; to Oropus, Aba, Dodona,

* *Quàm dulce est peregrinis post multam longi itineris fatigationem, post plurima terræ marisque pericula, ibi tandem quiescere, ubi et agnoscunt suum Dominum quievisse! Puto jam præ gaudio non sentiunt viæ laborem, nec gravamen reputant expensarum; sed tanquam laboris præmium, cursusve bravium (βραβεῖον) assecuti; juxta Scripturæ sententiam, gaudent vehementer cum invenerint sepulcrum. St. Bernard. Exhort. ad Milites Templi, cap. 11.*

Delphi. Yet although the errand in these cases was often a fruitless one, and the belief whence it arose superstitious, the motive—had but the premises been sound, was calm and rational, and not at all of the sort to kindle the imagination, or to disturb the passions. Instruction, advice, or what perhaps might be equally serviceable—a final decision on some perplexing occasion of public or private life, was needed and sought for; and, whether for the better or the worse, was actually obtained from the ministers of the mephitic cavern. Now it must be granted that an authoritative determination—even supposing there to be an equal chance of truth and error, might, in many an instance, well repay a journey of three hundred miles, or a voyage of five. The common business of life, and the affairs of state too, were often much advantaged among the Greeks by their appeals to what one might call a Court of Chancery, in which the god gave verdicts, generally without delays, always without pleadings, and most often for moderate fees.

We have yet to search for the pattern or the origin of the practice of pilgrimage; but find resemblances rather than actual analogies. Such may be deemed, and it is not more than a resemblance, that usage of the Jewish people which brought the male population of the country, three times in the year, to the centre and only sanctioned place of public worship. An auspicious institution, manifestly adapted to diffuse, and to keep in brisk circulation among a simple and agricultural people, the several elements of social and religious prosperity. Then it is evident that the shortness of the distances,

the frequency of the visit, and the universality of the obligation, must have obviated the evils which attend the custom of pilgrimage. No danger, ordinarily, nor perilous adventure, and no extreme privations, could beset a journey of fifty, a hundred, or a hundred and fifty miles, through a home-land, densely peopled ; nor could any but the calmest and happiest sort of excitement spring up on an occasion which, instead of being a single and solemn act of a man's life, was the constant habit of his life. But the main circumstance of difference is this—that the resort of the people to the tabernacle and temple, being a national duty, and a general or universal practice, could never be made the ground of boasting or of honour by individuals ; nor could be thought of as a meritorious enterprise, by the aspirants to religious reputation.

The Mosaic institution seems to have *set* the habit of journeying in the Jewish character, and to have fixed it there so firmly and tranquilly, that in after ages, when the circumstances of a visit to the Holy City were altogether altered, and were such as might readily have kindled an active fanaticism, dangerous to the governments which allowed it, the ancient devout serenity held its place in the feelings and manners of the people of the dispersion. Those who, during the Persian, Macedonian, and Roman eras (the early portion of it) came to appear before the Lord from the remotest settlements of Lybia, or Scythia, or India, went “from strength to strength” with a feeling nearly the same as that of their happier ancestors, whose journey lay only through the olive vales of Palestine. It is not until we

approach the dark hour of the catastrophe of the city, that we meet with the indications of a different spirit. Then indeed a frenzy had seized the obdurate race, both at home, and in the lands of its exile ; and the resort of the scattered nation to the ill-fated Jerusalem, was like the rush of acrid humours to the heart and head of a delirious man. This season excepted, the Jewish pilgrimages to the holy city, were not, as it appears, marked by fanatical turbulence.

The purpose of the worshippers was rational, and their religious notions were, in the main, of a substantial and healthy sort : they did not travel a thousand miles, to kiss a stone, or to purchase a relic ; but to take part in the services of that Temple where alone, in all the world, the first principles of theology were understood, and the true God adored. The journey, and its attendant sentiments, were such as befitted its object.

It is a preposterous creed that makes pilgrimage fatal. In this case Delusion leads the way ; Crime attends the route ; and Despair and Frenzy at the last come up to urge the infatuated troop toward the horrid spot where Misery and Death are to be glutted with victims. Such, in brief, and with circumstantial differences only, have been the pilgrimages that have beaten the roads of India, of Arabia, and of Palestine. To the latter, we should remember, is due the blood-stained glory of giving birth to the Crusades ; for if there had been no resort of the pious to the desolated sepulchre, there would probably have been no heroes of the cross :—if no Peter the Hermit, no Tancred, no Godfrey, no Baldwin, or Richard !

Should we not, in this place, note the fact that, while superstition, as if with a power of fascination, has always been drawing men from extensive surfaces toward some one vortex of delusion, true Religion, on the contrary, has shown itself to possess an expansive force, which has rendered it a point of radiation, or an emanative centre, whence light and blessings have flowed to the remotest circumference! If a criterion were wanted which, by exterior facts alone, might discriminate between a false and a true belief, little hazard would be run in assuming such one as this—That the former will be seen to be gathering up, and accumulating, and devouring; while the other spreads itself abroad, and scatters, and diffuses, as widely as it may, whatever benefits it has to confer. Christianity is not the religion of a shrine, of a sepulchre, of a chair, or of a den; but of all the broad ways of the world, and of every place where man is found.*

* In treating of the Fanaticism of the SCOURGE, a passing notice, at least, of the miserable Flagellants of the 13th and 14th centuries, may be looked for. The pitiable frenzy, though of fatal consequence for a time, and horribly suppressed, does not seem to merit much attention either as a matter of history or of philosophy. What has been handed down concerning these dolorous vagrants is familiar to most readers. Froissart's account (Vol. ii. p. 263.) relates to the last irruption of the Flagellants. "This year of our Lord 1349, there came from Germany persons who performed public penitences by whipping themselves with scourges having iron hooks, so that their backs and shoulders were torn: they chanted also, in a piteous manner, canticles of the nativity and sufferings of our Saviour; and could not, by their rules, remain in any town more than one night: they travelled in companies of more or less in number (it is elsewhere affirmed that they amounted sometimes to ten

thousand, and included persons of the highest rank) and thus journeyed through the country, performing their penitence for thirty-three days, being the number of years Jesus Christ remained on earth : and then returned to their own homes. These penitences were thus performed to entreat the Lord to restrain his anger, and withhold his vengeance ; for at this period an epidemic malady ravaged the earth, and destroyed a third part of its inhabitants." This fanaticism was of too turbulent a kind to be suffered by the Church, which after severely denouncing it, and in vain, at length let loose upon it the armed ministers of her power. Eight thousand persons were massacred in a day by the Teutonic knights at the command of Pope Clement VI. There is reason to believe that some articles of the dominant superstition had been called in question by these penitents.

SECTION VI.

FANATICISM OF THE BRAND.

A GALERIUS, an Alva, a Bonner, cross our path in every street of a populous city ; and doubtless the agents and ministers of such formidable personages might be found in every crowd. The chief and his company, fit for the labours of religious cruelty, we must not think have passed away with ages long gone by : but rather believe that they are about us now, and wait only the leave or bidding of circumstances to re-act their parts. Or, to confess in a word the whole humiliating truth, it is Human Nature, such, alas, as it is harboured in every bosom, that offers itself, with more or less readiness, to the excitement of malign, and even of murderous passions !

As well therefore justice toward the signalized authors of persecution, whom we are apt to regard as beings of infernal origin, as a due caution, having respect to the possible events of some day which may yet come in the world's history, demands that, instead of merely taking a distant glance at the tragedies of remote times, we should look into the heart in search of those latent motives whence the

worst atrocities might take their spring. The man is indeed to be envied whose spirit contains no such elements as would enable him to institute an analysis of this sort :—few will make the profession ; and perhaps among those who would, there may be one or more that, if gradually drawn into the eddy of turbulent emotions, would, after a while, be found foremost in deeds of violence ; for it is certain that the impulses of sanguinary fanaticism act and re-act one upon another until passions are generated which quite bear down every gentler feeling of our nature.

The offence given to self-love, and the wound inflicted upon pride when we encounter resistance in matters of opinion, is deep in proportion, not simply to the importance of the question debated, but to its obscurity also ; for in this case a secret dread of being at length overthrown and humbled, adds asperity to arrogance. It is obvious then that no subject can equal religion in furnishing occasion to these keen resentments. The vastness and unlimited range of the matters it is concerned with, the infinite importance of its truths, and the readiness with which the weight of what is substantial may be made over to what is not so—even to the most trivial of its adjuncts, fit it well to impart the utmost vehemence to whatever feelings attend the contests of mind with mind. All this hardly needs to be affirmed ; nor can we wonder to see the bitterness of ordinary strife assuming, when religion is the subject of controversy, a virulence, such as makes secular contentions seem vapid and trivial. Common hatred now rises to an immortal abhorrence ; wrath swells to execration, and every ill wish breaks out in anathemas.

That feelings so strong should vent themselves in vindictive acts, when opportunity serves, is only natural ; and, without advancing further, we might, in this manner solely, account for the cruelties in which religious discords have so often terminated. But there seems to be something yet deeper in the tendency to employ torments and death as means of persuasion. It should be expected that a course of action so preposterous as that of destroying men in professed love to their souls,* will be found to take its rise from some sheer absurdity ; such, for example, as that of putting an antagonist into the position with which we associate the idea of atrocious crimes in order to confirm ourselves in the belief that he is indeed—an atrocious criminal. This we grant is reasoning in a circle ; but it is a logic not strange to the human mind. A secret influence, not to be resisted, impels us to do homage to the elements of virtue, even when we are most violating its particular precepts. This homage, although rendered unconsciously, is not the less real in its effects. We can in no case hate and curse our fellow-men until after we have wrought ourselves up to the persuasion that they are condign objects of such treatment. But in the instance of religious animosities such a persuasion is not ordinarily to be attained, except in a

* There is no cruelty comparable to that which wraps itself in villanous hypocrisy. The Roman Church, nor that alone, has always professed the tenderest regard to the spiritual welfare of those whom she was about to let drop into her fires. And thus the Holy Office, in the instructions which guide its agents, provides that—"If a prisoner falls sick, the inquisitors must carefully provide him with every assistance, and more particularly attend to all that relates to HIS SOUL." See Llorente.

circuitous track. Even the slenderest pretext for charging upon our opponent any moral delinquency is often wanting ; on the contrary, perhaps, a blameless life and temper put to shame every attempted calumny. Woe to our victim if this be the case, for then the work of vilifying him must be so much the more elaborately cruel. To establish, to our own satisfaction, the guilt of our enemy by the method of argument, by fair inference and evidence, is a process too slow to keep pace with the velocity of the vindictive passions. What then remains but, by the forms of law, if law be at our bidding, and by the sword of justice, if justice be our obsequious servant, to consign the hated impugner of our will to the class of malefactors ? When once we have looked upon him as covered with ignominy, and if we can but see him pale with the paleness which a dungeon sheds on the face, and if we do but catch the clanking of a chain about his neck which a Barrabas yesterday wore ; and if we hear him groaning under torments that are the schooling of obdurate wickedness ; then we can fill up with ease what before was wanting to tranquillize a just revenge. The circle of our ideas is complete, our moral instincts come round to their close ; we breathe again ; and by inflicting those heavy injuries which are presumptive evidence of demerit, we prove to ourselves, as well as to the world, that the object of our hatred was indeed worthy of detestation !

A mode of reasoning analogous to this—if reasoning it should be called, is not of rare occurrence. ‘The man must be odious, or should I thus maltreat him ?’ and then greater outrages must be committed,

if it be only to justify the first assault. The bystanders in a common quarrel may often follow angry spirits around a circle of this sort. Perhaps in the first burst of resentment a much more grievous imputation of bad motives was advanced than the facts of the case would at all sustain ; or indeed than the accuser had himself seriously intended. But his position is now taken, and it is a law, that hatred can make no backward step. At once to bring over to his side the sentiments of others, and to fill out his own vindictive emotions, he goes on to deal with his antagonist as if the exaggerated indictment were fully established. Then, from the overt act of vengeance, an inference is brought back upon the demerit of its object.

Religious rancour once generated, whether in the manner we have described, or in some other which we have failed to penetrate, gets aggravation from incidental causes, some of which demand to be mentioned. One of the most ordinary of these is the mixed feeling of jealousy and interested pride that floats about the purlieus of every despotism, and especially of religious despotisms. It is trite to say that cruelty is produced or exasperated by the consciousness of weakness, and as the foundations of spiritual tyranny are less ostensible, and more precarious than those of secular government, its alarms will be more vivid, its jealousies more envenomed, and its modes of procedure more severe and intemperate. The natural temper of men being supposed the same, it can hardly happen otherwise than that the rod of ghostly supremacy should be a more terrible

engine than the sceptre and the sword of temporal power. Must we not admit too—and without offence, that, if once he gives way to the taste for cruelty, the man of the cowl and cloister will prove himself a more inexorable, and a more ingenious tormentor, than the man of the field and cuirass ?*

In its very worst condition, and during those ages when every thing human was broken up or corrupt, the sacerdotal order, looked at in the whole of its influence, must be allowed to have been a benefit to the nations : and how incalculable a benefit has it proved in happier eras ! And who shall imagine the happy fruits of the same institution when it comes to take effect upon the social system with the unembarrassed power of its proper motives ? What now we speak of is the sacerdotal temper, such as we find it when those motives are forgotten, or are spurned.

* One of the earliest and most zealous advocates of the practice of burning heretics is said to have been the Abbot Theophanes, who himself suffered extreme severities under the Iconoclast, Leo V. Pain (for besides his voluntary penances he was subject to the stone) was the unhappy man's element ; and he doled it out to others with a freedom corresponding with the alacrity with which he bore it himself. This connexion between the infliction and the endurance of torments has been a very frequent one ; frequent enough to bring under just reprobation every specious form of asceticism. The Abbot Theophanes, we are told, commenced his course of abnegation by an act well fitting the course he afterwards pursued as author or promoter of ecclesiastical cruelties. " Being arrived at man's estate, he was compelled by his friends to take a wife ; but on the day of his marriage he spoke in so moving a manner to his consort on the shortness and uncertainty of this life, that they made a mutual vow of perpetual chastity. She afterwards became a nun ; and he, for his part, built two monasteries in Mysia."—*Lives of the Saints*, March 13.

The moral sentiments are always in some degree put in danger by the possession of privilege ; still more so if the distinction be of an undefined and intangible sort. Then again this danger is much enhanced if serious privations, or disabilities, are the price paid for indistinct honours ; because in that case a perpetual petulance, or dull revenge, works itself into the character, and adds the bitterness of concealed envy to the arrogance of rank ; so that the malign sentiments of the pauper and of the oligarch come to be concentrated in the same bosom. If moral disadvantage can yet be aggravated, it is so when the being who already has been too much alienated from his species by the destitution of real sympathies, and by participation in a ghostly nobility, is, in his mode of life, actually secluded from the open world, and breathes the poison of a cell.

Nevertheless the pernicious consequence of circumstances so unfavourable will be found open to many more exceptions than theory might lead us to expect ; for it may be thought that not one human heart in a thousand would fail to become depraved from long exposure to influences so bad ; whereas in fact it is not perhaps more than a third of every thousand that undergoes to the full the perversion of its genuine sentiments ; while another third appears scarcely at all impaired by a process that might seem of efficacy enough to break down the virtue of a seraph.

Yet our anticipations will not fail us in relation to the third or the fourth of any body of men that is so cruelly placed in the focus of spiritual ruin. More than a few such men will exhibit in temper

(and in conduct if opportunity permits) what a vicious system may do in rendering men—men like ourselves, abhorrent, malign, and foul. Especially shall we find in such a body frequent instances of a peculiar species of ferocity, like to nothing else in the circle of human sentiments;* a rancour from which has been discharged all that is vigorous and generous in manly resentments, and all that is relenting in those of woman; a rancour which, although some few single examples of it had before been shown to the world in the course of twenty centuries, had never attached to a body, as its characteristic, until the sacerdotal institution, under the fostering care of the Romish Church, reached its maturity!

What modern heart would not fail if it were permitted to us for an hour to step back from the nineteenth century to the age of Vespasian, and to push our way into the theatre of imperial and popular diversions, just when the gladiator was about to die for the sport of a philosophic prince, and of sumptuous citizens; or when hungry beasts were to be glutted with the warm flesh of the nobility of a conquered kingdom! And yet the ancient Roman theatre, with its mere sprinkling of blood, and its momentary pangs and shrieks, quite fades if brought into comparison with that Colisæum of Papal cruelty, in which,

* In that particular species of ingenuity which exercises itself in the invention of torments, sacerdotal artists have certainly outstripped all competitors. Happy is the reader if he be still ignorant—and continue so, of the *mechanical secrets* of ecclesiastical prison-houses. Descriptions of this sort injure the mind; they rack the imagination, and engender emotions of resentment and disgust which do not well comport with christian feelings.

not a hundred or two of victims, but myriads of people, and nations entire, have been gorged ! If we must shrink back, as assuredly we should, from the one spectacle, we shudder even to think of the other. Though it were possible to summon courage enough to gaze upon the mortal—yet equal, conflict of man with man in the theatre, how shall we contemplate torments and burnings inflicted by the strong upon the weak ? or if we might endure to see the lion and the panther spring upon their prey, could we force ourselves to the far more horrid sight, when the priest and the friar, athirst, were to rush upon men, women, and babes !

Agitating emotions, whether of indignation or of terror, are however to be restrained, and in calmer mood—a mood compatible with the exercise of reason, and which may allow us even to intermingle, where it can be done, excuses and pity for the perpetrators of crime—often far more unhappy than the sufferers, we should survey that strange scene of woe whereon the Romish priesthood, age after age, has figured.

But is it equitable, some may ask, to single out the Papal Hierarchy as the incomparable example of all religious ferocity ? Were not the ancient idolatries—Druidical, Syrian, Scythian, and Indian, cruel and sanguinary ; and have not the more modern superstitions of Mexico and Hindoostan been deeply stained with blood ? It is true that they have ; but a distinction presents itself, which places the papal immolations and tortures on a ground where there is nothing to compare with them. It might be enough to say, that the annual or triennial

sacrifice of a few victims, or the gorging of captives reserved for that very purpose from the slaughter of the field, have in no country amounted to a tenth of the numbers that, in equal portions of time, have fallen around the altar of the Romish Church. But leaving this point, there is a clear difference much in favour of the pagan rites, between the shedding the blood of a victim (using the term in its restricted sense) at the impulse of a sincere superstitious dread ; and those executions and exterminations that have sprung, not from horrors of conscience—not from error of belief ; but from sheer rancour. Superstition does indeed tend to blood, and often is guilty of it ; but Fanaticism—fanaticism such as that of the Romish Hierarchy, breathes revenge, and murder beats from its heart.

Historic justice demands, however, that another comparison should be made ; and it is one which seems to relieve a little the horrors of the papal tyranny : we speak, of course, of the severities under which the Christians of the first three centuries suffered, from the pagan predecessors of the Popes, on the seven hills.—Might one not believe that the demon of blood, though dislodged for a season when the house of Cæsar fell in ruins, had lurked for a century or two in the mists of the Tiber, or had slept in the swamps of Campania, until scenting its new occasion, and springing up refreshed, it entered with greetings the halls of the Vatican ! It may be difficult or impossible, imperfect as is our information, equitably to decide between imperial and papal Rome on the question of ferocity. Yet some points of difference present themselves very clearly ;—as 1st. The

imperial persecutions of the Church are, in most instances, to be attributed to the personal temper or the fears or jealousies of the emperors, as individuals;* whereas the papal cruelties sprung from the system, and never failed to be displayed, whatever might be the character of the Pontiff, as often as the specific provocation arose.† 2dly. More

* The first persecution (to follow the vulgar computation) was the act of Nero—*Religionum usquequaque contemtor*; the second of Domitian—*non solum magnæ, sed et callidæ inopinatæque sævitæ*: what shall we say of the emperors to whose jealousies or philosophic pride are attributed the third and fourth? The fifth took place under Severus—*natura sævus*—*vere Pertinax, vere Severus*. The sixth under Maximin—a genuine savage, as jealous as fierce:—the seventh, horrible as it was, should be attributed to the political fears and energetic resolves of Decius:—the eighth persecution perhaps had its origin in the envy of an obscure individual. The austerity and vigour of Aurelian, *qui esset*, says Lactantius, *natura vesanus et præceps*, if not diverted, would probably have given to the ninth more than a name. The tenth, and the heaviest, was the fruit, partly of the personal dispositions, but more of the political fears of its two imperial authors.

† The personal character of the Pontiff has no doubt often made itself felt in the measures pursued by the Church. But in quite as many instances the handling of the keys has seemed to effect a total metamorphosis of dispositions:—the *cardinal* was one being—the *pope* another; and the college has had reason almost to doubt the identity of the person whom they had lifted to the summit of power. Thus the very man who had been singled out as more likely than any other to respect his oath, and to achieve desired reformatations, has been the one most audaciously to brave the amazement of his comrades, and to defy the clamours of christendom. The average date of each pontificate, taking the entire series to the present time, has been little more than seven years—and those, generally, the last years of decrepit age. But a system of government which, from century to

than one or two of the ten persecutions appear to have been, on the part of the imperial government, a desperate endeavour, prompted by serious alarms, to rid the state of a formidable intestine foe. A reluctant use, as it seems, was made of means so severe, but which were deemed indispensable to the preservation of the vast edifice of the empire.* Now if it be alleged that the papal persecutions had often similar motives, and might therefore admit of a parallel excuse, we must rest the difference on the ground, that the maintenance of a civil polity (if the means be lawful) is always a duty and a virtue in public men ; while we can regard the supporters of a ghostly domination in no other light than as hateful usurpers ; and never can it be a virtue to uphold that which, in its essence, and under any condition, is wicked. Then 3dly. The pagan persecutions were, for the most part, enacted and executed by men schooled in the field of war, and of war, against barbarous hordes. They were men indurated too, from youth, by the spectacles of

century, consigns the reins of power to trembling hands, must of course derive its temper and character much more from the body than from the head. The average reign of the Roman Emperors was about ten years ;—and those, for the most part, the mid years of life ;—few of the series reached the extreme verge of mortal existence.

* Putting out of view the violent dispositions of Galerius, there is abundant reason to believe that the fatal decision which burst like thunder over the Roman world from the palace of Nicomedia, was the result, in the main, of purely political calculations. Nothing beyond such calculations appears—two hundred years before, to have influenced the conduct of Trajan, such as himself holds it up to view, in his letter of instructions to Pliny.

the theatre ; that is to say, taught ferocity as much by their pastimes and festivities, as by their campaigns. From the hands of beings so trained what could be looked for ?* But it is quite otherwise with the popish cruelties ; for these, in every age, have been devised and executed by men of the cloister ;—men emasculate in habit, and whose nerves should have had the sensibility which sloth, study, and indulgence engender. An atrocity perpetrated by the hand of a delicate woman is always deemed to indicate a more malignant soul than one that is the act of a bandit or a pirate. By the same rule, should not the priest be somewhat more humane than the soldier ? Yet in fact, the principals and the agents in the destruction of heretics were men who had personally learned none of the bad lessons of war, and had witnessed no scenes of torment or bloodshed but those in which themselves were the actors. Should it be forgotten, while this comparison is pursued, that the emperor and the senate, the proconsul and the centurion, knew nothing more than the darkness of paganism could teach them ; but popes and cardinals, legates, priests and monks, held the Gospel of peace in their hand !†

* The Roman soldier had become a far more ferocious being in the age of the emperors than he had been in that of the consuls. In the early era he was a member of a limited community, and had his home—his virtues—his personal sentiments ; in the latter period he was ordinarily nothing better than an enlisted barbarian—how unlike to the warrior-citizen of whom, subaltern as well as chief, it might be said, in the words of Florus, . . . *expeditione finita, rediit ad boves rursus triumphalis agricola.*

† It is customary to speak of the middle ages as destitute, as

The bas-reliefs and bronzes of the age of Roman greatness have brought down for our inspection the form and visage of the Roman soldier, such as he was under Nerva, Trajan, Aurelius, Domitian. The contracted brow declares that storms of battle have beat upon it often : the glare of the overshadowed eye flings contempt upon death : the inflated nostril breathes a steady rage : the fixed lips deny mercy : the rigid arm and the knit joints, have forced a path to victory, through bristled ramparts, and triple lines of shields and swords. And withal there is a hardness of texture that seems the outward expression of an iron rigour of soul, a power, as well of enduring as of inflicting pain ; and the one with almost as much indifference as the other. Shall we conceive of encountering on the open field, a being so firmly fierce, and so long accustomed to crush and trample upon man ? But who shall imagine himself to have been delivered into the hands of the Roman soldier—armed not as a warrior, but as an executioner ? This indeed is terror ! Alas then, let us commiserate the fate of our brethren and sisters in Christ—the early martyrs ! What had they to look for when the centurion's band, such as we see it now encircling the column of Trajan, was let loose upon

well of scriptural as of profane learning ; and this may be true of the mass of the people ; but certainly it is not so of the principal actors in Church affairs. By the ecclesiastical writers of those times Scripture is quoted as largely and familiarly as it is in modern religious books. St. Bernard, in the tracts and letters by which he instigated the second crusade, scarcely moves through a paragraph without a text.—Every thing is thought of—but the morality of the enterprise !

a flock of trembling victims, with license and command to torture and to kill !*

Yet we have not reached the extreme point of horror ; for there remains a picture which still more chills the blood. True, the Roman soldier, as well by his murderous occupations, as by his brutal usages, had become hard and cruel ; yet there was no mystery in his rage : savage more than malign, his purposes of evil sprung only from the provocations of the hour ; they were not profound as hell. We turn then from the bas-reliefs, and sculptures, and coins of ancient art, and open an illuminated codex, choice treasure of a monkish library ! At the head of homilies and prayers, or of meditations and miracles, and set in flowers of purple and gold, we find the veritable effigy of the canonized zealot, abbot or brother—a Dominic, or a Fouquet. How delicate was the bodily frame and outward texture of the man : the soft contour bespeaks physical and mental laxity ; yet is there too, in the mobile features, an indication of that resolution which excitement may give, if not that which animal courage imparts. An abject habit of soul, together with a boundless insolence ; ■ usage of submission to every tyranny, and an arrogance that would crush a world when provoked, meet in the tortuous brows. Under how many impenetrable coverings are the secrets of that heart concealed—if we are to judge

* The cruelties endured by the Christians were often inflicted to appease the ferocity of the rabble. *Καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸν Ἀτταλον τῷ ὀχλῷ χαρίζομενος ὁ ἡγεμὼν, ἐξέδωκε πάλιν πρὸς θηρία. Epist. Vienn. et Lugd.* Similar expressions abound in the early martyr-ologies.

by the wily closing of the lips, and the wrinkled temples ! The face, taken at a glance, is the very pattern of penitential ecstasy ; but to look at it again is to find it wanting in the traces of every human affection. The man, beside that his occupations have not been of the sort that give vigour to the animal system, and cheerful alacrity to the mind, has no kindly relationships, no natural cares, no mild hopes : he is not social, he is not domestic ; but in the place of every genuine impulse, he harbours the rancid desires of a suppressed concupiscence. Who could imagine him to be a husband, or a father, or a friend, or a neighbour, or a citizen, or a patriot ? Hover where it may, this is an alien spirit, foreign to whatever is human ; and at home only in the world of ghostly excitements : it haunts earth—not dwells upon it.

What then, think we, shall this being show himself when he comes to be inflamed by spiritual revenge, and quickened by the virulence of those boundless hatreds which a malignant superstition engenders ! And what, when the engines of a mighty despotism are entrusted to his zealous hands ! Horror has now nothing worse to conceive of : the ghastly ideal of cruelty is filled up. Who would not rush from the grasp of the irritated ascetic, to cling to the knees of the Roman soldier, and there plead for such compassion as man shows to man !

Nevertheless this horrific personage *is* human, nor perhaps worse than many, if we deduct all that the bad system it has been his wretched lot to live under has done to pervert him. The Franciscan, the Inquisitor, once sucked the breast of woman, and

joined in the mirth and gambols of childhood ; and even now, if it were possible to take him apart for a moment from his rules, we might find in his bosom the germs at least of the common charities of life : doubtless he is human—the brain, for aught that appears, might as well have entertained reason and truth as another brain ; the heart, for aught that we can see, might, as readily as another heart, have throbbed with pity !

System and circumstance deducted, the Franciscan or the Inquisitor may be found in all communities. Look, for example, at that grave and abstracted, yet youthful countenance ; pallid, and somewhat fallen from the salient outline that should bespeak the actual years. What intensity in the glare of the sunken eye ! What fixedness of purpose in the lips ! and every movement seems inspirited with some intention beyond simple locomotion, or mechanical agency : as he walks, one would think that he was hastening onward by the side of an invisible competitor for a prize at the goal. Or hear him speak : he is terse and precise : his tones too, have a certain mystic monotony, in place of the natural modulations of a voice so young. But listen to his opinions ; how vehement are they ! how darkly coloured his representations of simple facts ! exaggeration swells every sentence ; and how far from youthful are his surmises ! and his verdicts how inexorable ! not a look, not a word, not an action of his belongs to the level of ordinary sympathies : all is profound as the abyss, or lofty as the clouds. But, strange to say, you may perhaps find this our instance, to be one of ■ community that boasts itself as the especial enemy

of intolerance ! he has been bred in the heart of the very straitest sect of liberality, and would die gladly in the sacred cause of religious freedom ! How like is man to man, strip him only of a garb ! Take now our fervent youth, and immure him a year or two with twenty like himself, in some dim seclusion : there work upon his passions with whatever is acrid in the system he already holds, and you may draw him on, with a little art—the art of sacred logic, from inference to inference, until he comes into a state of mind to which nothing, the most exorbitant, will seem strange. You must then find for him a sphere of excitement ; and without beads or a cowl, he will act the part of the worthiest son of the Church, in the darkest age !

We return to matters of history : and ask by what rule of equity a balance is to be held between the cruelties of the papacy, and the exterminating wars of the Moslem conquerors ? Without affirming absolutely on which side the scale might turn, certain points of comparison at once present themselves :—such for example as these. The fury of the early propagators of the doctrine of Mohammed was that of warriors who, having launched upon the great enterprise of conquering the world, could not mince their measures. Or, if we turn to those who, in a later age, took up the cause of the Prophet, we must remember, that the ferocious hordes that pressed upon Christendom were SCYTHIAN before they were Mohammedan, and had long been used to drink the blood of their enemies from skulls, when they came to be taught a new religion from the Koran. The Moslem conquests (under the caliphs) were a storm

that wasted the countries it passed over, and died away ; and it is to be remembered that the conquerors, when once firmly seated in their fair possessions, exhibited, in their polity and manners, far more that was liberal and humane than the world had long before seen, or than it saw elsewhere, during many ages afterwards.* Of the intolerance of the modern Mohammedan world, Turkish and Persian, it may fairly be said that, though in ■ sense attributable to the religious system of those nations, this despotic policy is nothing more than a homogeneous part of the oriental economy. This intolerance is ASIATIC, rather than Mohammedan. What but rigour and a tyrannous dogmatism can be imagined to find a place among nations whose theory of government springs from the relation of lord, and slave ?† Whether this theory belongs to the climate, or to the physical conformation of the race, or to what else, we will not say ; but come whence it may, it is much older than the age of Mohammed ; nay, as old as history.

That measure of liberty of opinion—we may remark in passing, or of liberality of sentiment and of sceptical indifference, which of late has worked its way through the widening fissures of the Persian and Turkish governments, is not merely inconsistent

* In the next section the Mohammedan military fanaticism will come to be considered.

† The reader may perhaps think that the southern states of the American Union, where no other marked distinction exists between man and man, except that of lord and slave—or of sallow skin and black, present an instance directly at variance with the position advanced above. We assume this very instance, on the contrary, as the most pertinent that could be adduced in confirmation of the general truth.

with the abstract idea of those political structures, but is incompatible with their continuance. If already the dyke of despotism had not bulged and gaped, the insidious element of freedom could not so have penetrated its substance : the fact of its having penetrated is at once a proof of decay, and a prognostic of that coming rush of waters that must, within a century, lay waste—lay waste to fertilize, the eastern world, from the deserts of the Indus to the mouths of the Danube : shall we add—to the shores of the Baltic, and the banks of the Elbe ?

But the elements of the social system, and the principles of its construction have ever been, even from the remotest times, altogether of another sort in the west. Notwithstanding all oppressions and degradations, the love of liberty, through a long course of ages—during the lapse of three thousand years, has clung to the European race. If some of these families, anciently as free as others, have, in modern times, quite sunk to the dust under the foot of despotism, it has only been by the presence and aid of the spiritual power ; it has been by the incubus of the church, that the people have fallen. Popery apart—every nation west of the Euxine had long ago been free ; nay, had never been enslaved. The papal usurpation (thinking of it now only as a system of polity) has resided in Europe, not as a form of things in harmony with the spirit and temper of the region ; but *malgre* the aboriginal character with which it has always had to contend.* Popery is not

* Every one knows that the several eras in which the papal despotism consolidated and extended its power, were those in

to Europe what Mohammedism is to Asia, but rather a long invasion of a soil which nature had said should bear nothing that was not generous. When shall the European families drive the exotic tyranny for ever from their shores !

There is little difficulty then in finding a sufficient reason, though not the sole reason, for the incomparable cruelties of popery : its restless jealousies, its exterminations, its inexorable revenge, have all been proper to it as a precarious and alien despotism.

The consciousness of an inherent hostility between itself and the temper of the nations it has seduced and subdued, has made it a tyranny more merciless than any other which mankind has tolerated. Even popery, we may fairly believe, might have been less sanguinary had it, from the first, seated itself in some congenial torrid climate, native to abjectness and slavery.

Were it true that this ancient, and now decrepit mother of corruption had actually disappeared from the real world ; or even could we believe, without a doubt, that she was very speedily to vanish, time might be better spent than in searching any deeper for the secrets of her power. But alas, it is not so ; and moreover it is true that a portion at least of the bad qualities whence this power arises, attaches to other systems beside the Romish Church, and may be discovered in dogmas not covered by her scarlet mantle. On all accounts then we must advance in

which the civil polities of Europe were in the feeblest or most distracted condition. The *termagant* watched the moment always when the *virile power* of the nations was spent or fallen.

our scrutiny, and expose, if it be possible, the hidden impulses of that malign fanaticism which popery has so largely engendered.

With this purpose in view, something must be said, 1st, of the doctrine of the Romish Church : 2dly, of its constitution as a polity ; and something, 3dly, of its sacerdotal institute.

I. We are, of course, to speak of the Romish doctrine only in the single point of its tendency to generate, or of its fitness to sustain, a sanguinary fanaticism.

The prominent article of the New Testament, and that which distinguishes Christianity from all other religious systems, is a doctrine of mercy incomparably full, free, and available. And yet this happy announcement of forgiveness of sins takes its stand upon a much more distinct and alarming assertion of the rigour of divine justice, and of the extent of its penal consequences, than hitherto had been heard of ; or than the natural fears of conscious guilt would suggest, or readily admit. This ample promise of grace, and this appalling declaration of wrath, may fairly be assumed as the prime elements of true religion, working always, and intended to work, one upon another, for the production of those vivid emotions that are becoming to man in his actual relation to God.

What less than the most serious evils can then accrue from disjoining these correlative principles, or from tampering with the efficacy which the one should exert upon the other ? If, for example, the doctrine of immutable justice, and of future wrath be brought in question, or abated of its force and

meaning, then, in the same degree, the doctrine of mercy loses its significance, its moment, and its attractions; and fades into the vague idea of an indolent clemency on the part of the Supreme Ruler; an idea which at once relaxes the motives, both of piety, and of morality. Such—we appeal to facts, has been the invariable result of every attempt to reduce the plain import of certain awful passages in the gospels. Or, on the other hand, if the method of forgiveness, as declared in the Scriptures, be in any way abused, then will the threatening of wrath take a wrong direction, and not fail, from its own intrinsic quality, to produce the most dire effects. The tremendous doctrine of eternal perdition, loosened from its proper hold of the conscience, remains at large, and will be at the disposal of the spiritual despot, to be drawn to this side or that, as may best subserve the purposes of intimidation and tyranny. Nor is this all, for the same appalling doctrine, so perverted by the despot, will take effect upon his own heart and imagination, and school him to act his part as the instrument of horrid barbarities. The zealot tormentor, thus taught from the pit, wants nothing but power to render him, of all beings, the most terrible and ruthless. If it were demanded to name the chief incentive of the ferocity of Romanism, we must plainly say, that the doctrine of eternal damnation, as held and perverted by the Romish Church, is the germ and motive of its cruelty. A malignant fanaticism of some kind (truculent if opportunity permits) must attend every misinterpretation or misapplication of what the Scriptures affirm concerning future punishment.

Let it be noted that our Lord and his ministers speak of the wrath of God as provoked by nothing but impiety and immorality ; and they leave us in no doubt of what it is specifically which they mean when they issue their comminations. It is the blasphemer and the impenitent ; it is the murderer, the thief, the liar, the slanderer, the impure, the adulterer, the perjured person, and the rapacious ; or, in a word, the sensual, the malignant, and the unjust, who have to expect the fiery indignation, the future “tribulation and anguish.” Terrible as it is, this doctrine leans, with its whole stress, to the side favourable to virtue ; nor is there anything mystic, indefinite, or obscure, attached to it. If any complain of the severity of the threat, let them forsake the evil of their ways, and its severity shall not touch them. Does any complain ? nay rather, let him repent, and it shall go well with him.

And not only, in the preaching of our Lord, and in the writings of his Apostles, is the threatening clearly attached to a vicious and irreligious life, and to nothing else ; but it is employed in no other way, and for no other purpose, than to enforce, or to give solemnity to the invitations of mercy. How cogent is the reason why men should humble themselves before Almighty God, and instantly sue for the pardon of their sin !

Thus defined, and thus employed, the doctrine, appalling as it may be, is clearly an engine of benevolence ; and it must have been grossly perverted if, in any case, it has ceased to deserve this commendation. So was it at first, and so in any age, whoever, after the example of Christ—the Saviour

of the world, spends life and strength in the endeavour to lead his fellows to the arms of the Divine compassion, because there remains a "fearful looking for of wrath" which shall fall on the impenitent, is not only no fanatic, but deserves the praise, and will win the recompense, of the highest and purest philanthropy.

Not such is the Romish doctrine of "the wrath to come;" nor such the spirit or the style of its preachers; nor such its pit of perdition! The papal hell is but the state prison of the papal tyranny? The future woe, converted into the instrument of its oppressions, has made it natural that the inflictions of the infernal dungeon should be taken as the exemplars of sacerdotal barbarity. All offences of a moral kind, even the most atrocious, having come under the management of the Church, and being made the subject of a mercenary commerce between her and the transgressor, so that while he submits implicitly to the direction of the priest, who farms heaven, he has nothing to fear—the bearing of the doctrine of retribution is wholly turned off from the consciences of men; and the genuine association of ideas, which should connect sin with punishment, is broken up. The preacher may still declaim about the righteous judgment of God; but in fact, and in every man's personal apprehensions, the terror of justice has passed off obliquely, and is no more thought of in its due place. The future retribution remains therefore at large to serve the turns of the hierarchy; nor is it anything else than an ecclesiastical terror. The Romish place of perdition awaits—whoever provokes the jealousies of the church, whether infidel or

heretic. Let us fix our minds a moment upon the natural consequences of this perversion of so momentous an element of religion.

We imagine then that we have embraced this Romish dogma, as true. How does it affect our sentiments toward the bulk of mankind ; or what impression does it convey of the Divine character and government ? Under such an influence, in the first place, we learn to think that the most heinous crimes—crimes aggravated by a full knowledge of religion, and committed in the face of its sanctions, enjoy impunity by the means of a villanous and interested misprision on the part of the functionaries of Heaven ; so that in fact Justice takes no hold of those whose fortune it is to be born upon a canonical soil, and where—the dispensing power having its agents, pardons are always in the market ! The actual state of morals in countries where, age after age, nothing has been tolerated that might serve to correct the proper influence of Popery—Spain, Portugal, Italy, affords proof enough that these suppositions are not imaginary.*

Yet the dogma has another, and perhaps it is a worse aspect. Imbued with its spirit, we turn toward the millions of mankind, pagan and mohammedan,

* The state of manners in the southern countries of Europe is now unhappily but too well understood in England ; nor need any reference, on this subject, be made to authorities. If it were alleged that the manners of the northern and protestant states are but a shade or two better than those of the south, we should then have to balance the unobstructed influence of popery against the scarcely at all obstructed influence of infidelity—and the scale would be seen to turn a little in favour of the latter.

whose misery it has been to have possessed no religious light, or a mere glimmer, and who, according to our Lord's rule, are to be "beaten with few stripes," for this reason, that they knew not his will : but upon these, we are taught to think, the unrelieved weight of the future wrath is to press. These, because they have no holy water, no holy oil, no absolving priest, are to suffer without mitigation. Thus have we subverted the order of reason and justice, and have rendered the righteous retribution of Heaven, which, as expounded in the Scriptures, is altogether of a sanatory influence, horribly corrupt and despotic.

The practical inference is inevitable :—If God thus deal with his creatures, inflicting the heaviest penalties where there has been the lowest responsibility ; and allowing a mercenary commutation of punishment in the case of the most aggravated guilt, why may not man, in his dealings with his fellows, follow on the same track, though at a humble distance? Who can affirm that, to carry the brand of exterminating war into the heart of pagan and mohammedan lands—to hack, and rip up, and dash to the ground, and burn, detested tribes of misbelievers—*miscreants*, is not a religious work? If it be not so, then the harmony that should subsist between divine and human virtue is broken. Such has actually been the belief and the practice of the Romish Church in every age. When the feeble nations of the Mexican Isthmus, and of Peru, fell under the feet of the "most Catholic" people of Europe, the mere avidity of gold would not have prompted so many torments, and so many massacres, had not the

soldier been pushed on by the friar, with this very dogma of perdition burning in his bosom !

And yet an inference which had to be carried out a thousand miles, or across the Atlantic, would not immediately affect more than a portion of the people in any country. Not so the inference which fell upon the heretic at home. In this application of it every man, every husband, and every wife, every father, and every child, might be concerned.* Especially did it affect the sacerdotal order, through all its ranks, and at every moment ; nay, every motive of corporate interest, and pride, and jealousy, bore upon it with the greatest force. The heathen world out of view, then the lake of perdition was to be peopled only by heretics, and by the contumacious impugnors of Church power ! ‘ Submit, recant, and be saved ; persist and be damned.’ Such was the voice of the Church, and such the rule of its proceedings ; and the history of Europe during a full thousand years—a history written in blood, has been the comment on the rule.

True it is, that the Ecclesiastical Hell of the Romish despotism has, at length, been closed, and a seal set upon it by the strong hand of the civil power, or the stronger hand of popular opinion ; but the dogma is what it was ; and the Church what it was :

* *Deinde promiscua multitudo, timore percussis animis, deferebant quosque certatim, nulla neque propinquitatis neque necessitudinis aut beneficiorum habita ratione, non parenti filius, non uxor marito, non cliens patrono parcebat. Delationes autem erant plerunque de rebus frivolis ; ut quisque forte aliquid ob superstitionem in aliquo reprehenderat. Melchior Adam, as quoted by Bayle. The passage relates to the establishment of a court of the Holy Office.*

and the pent-up fire of its revenge still murmurs through the vaults of the spiritual edifice, from the mouth of the Tagus to the Carpathian mountains ; only give it wind, and how should it rage to the skies ! The Waldenses, the Lollards, the Reformed of Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland, England, and the Huguenots of France, were the victims—not of a cruel age, but of a cruel doctrine ; and that doctrine is as cruel now, as it was in the pontificate of Innocent III.

II. A vindictive spirit and ferocious acts belong of necessity to a polity such as that of the Romish Church. Already we have mentioned the contrariety which subsists between the aboriginal European temper (as compared with the Asiatic) and a tyranny so excessive as that of the Church, and have noted the consequent severity of the hierarchical power. But this is not all ; for while it is true that popery is alien, as well to the climate, as to the races, of the western world, it exists also as a foreign power in every single country of Europe—Italy excepted. There can be no need to insist upon the general principle that a foreign domination will always be more jealous, and oppressive, and less placable than a domestic government. If there be exceptions to this rule, assuredly the Romish church does not afford one ; and every reader of modern history must often have observed the pernicious influence which Italian Churchmen have exerted in the councils of the European states. This influence has especially made itself seen in the rigour of those measures which kings, under terror

of excommunication, have been compelled to adopt for the maintenance of the far-stretched authority of Rome ; and the more so when the skirts of the Church fell over countries that were quickening into freedom.*

Over the same area, or nearly so, imperial Rome extended her sway ; but her instruments of power were visible and readily applied ; and therefore they admitted of leniency and reason in the use of them. A military despotism, founded on the right of conquest, confides in its means of securing obedience, and is often less afflictive to a country in fact, than in name. It must be otherwise, and always has been so, with a ghostly despotism. The conscious indistinctness of the grounds on which it demands submission, inspires it with an anxiety that leads it to overdo its severities. And then the abominable hypocrisy of not itself touching the sword of justice—such is the cleanness of its hands ! but of setting

* The free spirit of the European stock, which in England has long had its scope, has in no age been altogether broken down in France. The Gallican Church, century after century, has hung loose upon Rome ; and the papal court has felt how precarious were her spiritual possessions west of the Rhine and the Rhone. The horrors of St. Bartholomew, and the cruelties perpetrated by Louis XIV. were only the expressions of the conscious alarms of the Romish power in regard to France. When shall France learn to blush at once at her atheism, and at her superstitions ? Is it any thing but her atheism and her superstitions that have compelled her to cede to England the first place of moral influence in the world at large, and of foreign empire ? The horrors committed in the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva afford another illustration of the rule that has guided the Romish despotism in measuring out its vengeance.

the civil power at work, when blood is to be shed, can never fail to render its executions so much the more cruel and severe. To be tried and condemned by one authority ; and then to be made over for punishment to another, is a hard fate ; and can differ very little from that of becoming the victim of blind fury.

Besides, as the spiritual despotism rules by usurping the imaginations of men, and is seated upon their fears of an unseen futurity, it will, by a natural connexion of causes, have recourse, when provoked, to those means of intimidation which, by the horror they inspire, awaken the emotions on which the tyranny takes its hold. When endangered by resistance it will endeavour to regain its ground by such displays of intolerable anguish in the persons of its foes as shall fitly symbolize the torments that await them in the world to come. Thus in fact, the doctrine of perdition, as held by the Church, has been visibly typified in the mode of punishment it employs. Fire is the chosen means of its chastisements.*

* A curious comparison might be drawn between different nations on the point of the modes of capital punishment in use among them. The subject can only be glanced at here ; but it well deserves a more ample treatment. The Jews had three or four modes of inflicting death, but chiefly used the most summary—hanging or stoning. The Greeks had seven or eight ; yet very rarely had recourse to those which were excruciating :—the poisoned cup was the most usual ; or casting from a precipice. But fines, slavery, or banishment, were much oftener employed than capital punishment. The Romans, after they had conquered the world, and had amalgamated the usages of barbarous nations with the ancient practice of the Republic,

III. We have to speak, lastly, of the Romish clerical institution, and to exhibit that natural connexion of motives which has drawn upon the temper of its sacerdotal order a fanaticism more intensely ferocious than the world has elsewhere seen.

If the secular influence of the papal superstition be now immensely diminished, and if the engines it

added to their list of penal terrors several excruciating deaths; especially empalement, or crucifixion. Yet, if the acts of a few execrable tyrants are excepted, none but horrid and incorrigible criminals were consigned to lingering agonies. The institutions of Mohammed rather mitigated and restrained, than aggravated the penal severities of the oriental nations. Fines, whipping, or cudgelling, were admitted, instead of death. And whatever horrors may have been perpetrated by savage Scythian chiefs, it cannot be affirmed that cruelty is the *character* of the Mohammedan penal code.

The Romish Church, simplifying its practice, has fixed upon that one mode of inflicting death which must altogether be deemed the most horrible of all. She admits indeed, in certain cases, of strangling before burning; but again, in other cases, has used slow roasting, instead of burning at the stake. But the three main circumstances that distinguish the papal executions from those of any other polity are these—1st, The prodigious number of the victims of her courts. 2d, That all but a very few of these victims were confessedly guiltless of crimes visibly injurious to society. And 3d, That, while other polities have reserved ignominious and excruciating punishments for rare instances of obdurate wickedness, or for frightful crimes, and for persons of the vilest rank, the Romish polity has put out of view all such distinctions, and, without respect for rank, or habits, or personal merit, has consigned to the flames—nobles, prelates, men of letters, women—children. Nothing at all comparable to the blind ferocity of the Romish executions has elsewhere been seen in the world:—the world has seen no such judges as her priests.

once wielded have been broken ; if no longer it can breathe the rage of war into the hearts of kings ; and if the humility it affected in the twelfth century, is forced upon it in the nineteenth, and if therefore the danger of its hurling a brand again into the bosom of the European community be extremely small ; it is nevertheless true that the Romish Clerical Institution does still exist on all sides of us ; and that its elements are, in the nineteenth century, precisely what they were in the twelfth. And it is true, moreover, that an institution so incurably pernicious should be looked at, notwithstanding its actual feebleness at any moment, as a virulent germ, that waits only a favourable season to spring up with all its native properties about it.

The errors of Romanism, doctrinal and practical, we are so much accustomed to regard as objects of theological reprobation, and as opposed to the testimony of Scripture, that it is not easy at once to look at them in the light of what may be termed their merely physical quality. We propose, however, now to consider the Romish clerical institution in that light—all biblical argument apart, and especially to trace in it the natural generation of the spirit of cruelty.

A word has already been said of the moral peril to which the sacerdotal order, even under the most auspicious circumstances, is exposed. Of the several points of disadvantage there alluded to, we now select only one ; but it is the chief ; and it is that one which our subject points to. We affirm then, that the law of celibacy, taking effect, as it does, upon a large and promiscuous body of men, cannot fail to

produce, in a certain proportion of instances, a rancorous fanaticism. The broad fact that it has done so, we take as the guide and support of our argument ; and turn to the common principles of human nature for the interpretation of the fact.

Nothing can be meant by the phrase—the laws of Nature ; if we do not understand—Divine constitutions, wise, good, and indispensable, which are not to be tampered with, but at our cost. To say that such or such is the intention of nature, is to imply that some severe, and often incalculable mischief will accrue when that specific intention is thwarted. The usages of nations, or their political institutions, or their religious practices, have in a thousand modes contravened the beneficent purposes of the Creator ; but never have they done so without entailing innumerable woes. And yet is it remarkable that in such cases the actual ill consequences, often, have not been altogether of the sort that would have been looked for : or have not been apparently the direct effect of the special cause. An evil, such as none had foreseen, breaks out, on the one hand or the other, and stretches, none can say how far ! In truth, the great machine of the world, intellectual and physical, is so intricate, and is so remotely compacted, part with part, that when we disturb a power, no human sagacity can predict where, or at what stage, our presumption will meet its punishment. Thus we shall find it to have been with the celibacy of the Romish priesthood. The direct and obvious inconveniences and evils of the institution have indeed followed it every where ; and have been seen in the profligacy it has spread over the face of society, in the abominations it has

fostered, and in the personal sorrows it has entailed. But these, shall we say, have not been the MAIN MISCHIEFS of the system ; for we regard as deeper and more extensive than any of them, the encouragement it has afforded to exorbitant and inexorable opinions ; the excitement it has furnished to portentous modes of feeling, the impulse it has given to outrageous courses of conduct : and, in a word, the taste it has engendered for destruction and torture. The sanguinary fanaticism of the Romish Church we trace, through no very circuitous track, to the unnatural and unhappy personal condition of its ministers.*

The true extent of the violence done to human nature by the practice of religious celibacy has been in a great measure concealed from notice by a partial fact that seems to excuse it. It is always true that, in a body of men taken at random, a certain number will be found—we need not hazard a conjecture as to its amount, to whom, from peculiarity of temperament, a life of celibacy cannot be deemed unnatural, and to whom it will be no grievance. At least it may be affirmed of such, that some moderate and accidental motive of prudence, or taste, or the vexations of an early disappointment ; or perhaps a praiseworthy regard to the welfare of relatives, will abundantly suffice to reconcile them to their singular lot. Then

* A multiplicity of independent circumstances had influence in ripening the two principles—namely of clerical celibacy and ecclesiastical intolerance ; but it is fair to point out the coincident growth of the two. In truth the latter has followed so constantly upon the former, that to deny all connexion of causation is to be resolutely incredulous.

beyond this small circle there will be a wider one, including not a very few, to whom a motive some degrees stronger will prove efficient to the same end. A vigorous selfishness, for example, abhorrent of disturbance in its comforts, or fearful of the diminution of its dainties, will answer such a purpose; and are there not those who would never marry lest they should be compelled to dine less sumptuously? Or a strong intellectual taste produces the same effect: there have been artists and philosophers, many; indeed some of the most illustrious of men, who, having wedded a fair ideal, have sought no other love. Still more, the powerful sentiments of religion, have in very many instances, and in a manner not culpable, —sometimes commendable, separated men from the ordinary lot, and rendered them in a genuine sense virtuous, as well as happy, in single life. Such cases —exceptions made without violence, it is proper to take account of; they are Nature's exceptions, and those who come fairly under the description might be styled a physical aristocracy, born to illustrate the supremacy of mind.

Now inasmuch as religious motives, being more profound than any others, can never be brought within calculation, so as that we might fix a limit to their power, it must be deemed impracticable to ascertain to what extent they may operate safely, and without engendering much positive evil, in swelling the company of the unmarried. A large space should be left open for exceptions of this kind; and in truth we should be slow to condemn a course of conduct which, in the eye of Heaven, may not be reprehensible—the motives considered, of which we

must be ignorant. In times of religious excitement, and during the undisputed prevalence of enthusiastic opinions, many may devote themselves to celibacy, with the purest intentions.

The exceptive fact, such as we have stated it, was manifestly the rudiment of the ancient religious celibacy ; and it ought to be granted that, so long as a genuine excitement lasted, and moreover before spiritual despotism came in to avail itself of the usage, and to stretch the anomaly beyond its natural limits, the ill consequences would not be extreme. But how immensely different is the state of things, and how must the mischief be aggravated, when the law and custom of celibacy, having come to constitute an essential and permanent element of the social system of a country, not merely takes up the little band of *cælibes* by destination of nature ; but is every day applied, by priestly or paternal tyranny, to temperaments of all kinds, and, with a blind cruelty, is made to include those very instances upon which it will not fail to inflict the worst imaginable injuries ! In thinking of the celibacy of the Romish clergy, it is an error to regard it under the palliation of supposing that it just serves to draw into a company the scattered individuals of that frigid class, which every where exists ; whereas, in fact, it observes no such rule of selection.

The age at which youth are devoted to the service of the Church makes it certain that, in by far the greater number of instances, this decision is altogether irrespective of any supposed physical aptitude to submit to the condition imposed upon

the ministers of religion.* Might we conjecture that, so far as personal fitness has been at all thought of, there is a double probability that the most unhappy cases will be thrown into the toils of the presumptuous vow? Who does not know that an early destination to the church is very often the consequence of a manifest sluggishness of the mental faculties—a sensual and indolent propension, which, though it must cut off a man's chance of success in the arduous engagements of common life, is not

* In boyhood ordinarily. Although celibacy was not *imposed* upon the secular clergy until some time after the monkish system had reached its settled form, yet, when it was so imposed, what had been the usage of the monastery, became the usage of the clergy universally. And as the monastic vow was often taken before the eighteenth year—for we find Gregory the Great fixing that as the earliest age *in certain exceptive cases*, so was it usual for the sacerdotal function to be chosen irrevocably at the same period of life. Nay, it would seem that ordination, and church preferment even, were often conferred upon mere striplings. *Scholares pueri et impuberes adolescentuli ob sanguinis dignitatem promoventur ad ecclesiasticas dignitates, et de sub ferula transferuntur ad principandum presbyteris; lætiores interim quod virgas evaserint, quàm quod meruerint principatum.*—St. Bernard *de Officio Episcoporum*, c. 7. Cautions against the ordination of beardless youths are of frequent occurrence, proving the abuse to have been common: *Pueri ad sacros ordines nullatenus admittantur, ne tanto periculosius cadant, quantò citius conscendere ad altiora festinant.* In later times, as it is well known, the transition has been immediate from school to the church. It has been the policy of the Jesuits especially to make their selection of youths from the schools under their care. The earliest display of intellectual power fixed the eye of the superintendent; and forthwith the venom of the society's fanaticism was shed into the victim's mind.

likely to be a bar to his advancement in the sacred calling? But alas, how sadly will the oath of virginity affect constitutions of this order! Or a youth is not seldom devoted to the clerical profession from reasons of an opposite kind; namely a precocious display of intellectual tastes, with its attendant irritable delicacy or debility of constitution, which is foreseen to preclude laborious employments. And yet these very cases are precisely those in which the most lamentable consequences must ensue from the violence done to nature by the sacerdotal institute!

The high importance of the subject, the incalculable extent of the evils that have attached to it, the actual existence of the abuse in our own times; and (may we add?) some appearance of the rise of a general indignation against it, even in the heart of catholic countries, invite, and may excuse, notwithstanding the difficulty of doing so, our advancing; in truth, the subject is inseparable from the theme we have in hand.

Before we insist upon some more special matters, let us for a moment consider what, though it has often been adverted to, can never be too much regarded—the negative influence of clerical celibacy, as it cuts off, from the unhappy class of men to whom it applies, the very means which God has provided, and the only generally efficacious means, of generating sentiments of compassion and tenderness in the bosoms of men! Doubtless there are born a few natures so soft and sensitive, that, without wife or child, they feel and weep, and are kind as woman. But taking men at large, and

taking them exposed as they are to the rude operation of laborious occupations, and to the ungentle collisions of sordid interest, it is not in any other way than as husbands and fathers, and as possessors of the enjoyments of home, that the rough force of the mind, and the harshness of the temper, are broken down, and that gross selfishness is attempered; and especially that the habit is formed of considering and of realizing, by sympathy, the pains, infirmities, wants, and sorrows of others.* It is in this direction peculiarly that human nature needs a softening power; and admits it too. Barbarities of the worst sort spring often from the mere want of the habit of regarding the feelings of others; but this habit is not of spontaneous growth; it must be inwrought by the repetition of proper occasions.

Amid the stern contentions of public life, or under the severe labours and dangers of the field, a man is learning to discard as an incumbrance every gentle emotion, and is arming himself to bear down opposition. But he comes home, and, unless unblest indeed, is schooled in another, and a better lesson. Taken even at the lowest calculation, the amount of this counter influence upon the entire social system is vast. What would the world be, if we could imagine it wholly withdrawn? Look but to the rugged labourer, impenetrable as he seems, and follow him, when his task is done, to the door where he meets helpless playful infancy, where he finds that his wants have been thought of, where he

* *Uxor et liberi disciplina quædam humanitatis, at cælibes tetrici et severi.*—*Bacon.*

has offices of kindness to discharge : follow him, and admire the provision made for correcting in one hour the ungracious influences of twelve ! Nor is our supposition romantic. Whoever has been conversant with the lower classes, and whoever has an eye and an ear to catch the expressions of human charities, as they are rudely uttered, or uncouthly displayed, must often, in the crowd that gathers in a street about distress, have detected home-taught hearts and paternal sympathies, where the aspect and the tones might seem to indicate only a sensual ferocity.

Should we think it then a light matter to come in upon the circle of the domestic remedial influence—God's most beneficent ordinance, with our monstrous institutions, and at a stroke to cut off from a numerous body of men—and for ever—and from the very class that are to be the teachers of mercy, all their part in the economy of human kindness ? If indeed the design were horrid, the means would be fit ; but if it be religious, how preposterous are the means !

Let it only be imagined that the preservation of the social system demanded some necessary office, at once foul and sanguinary, hard and loathsome, to be discharged ; and that, to secure a supply of wretched beings to sustain the cruel function, it were deemed proper to train, from the cradle, a certain proportion of mankind. Among the various means that might be devised for effecting the initiation of such a miserable class, and for securing to it an education exclusive of every gentle sympathy, and of rendering our agents equally impure and rancorous, what

measure more efficacious could be imagined than that of imposing upon them the very celibacy in which the Romish Church breeds her ministers ?

We must yet look at this institution in its operation upon specific temperaments.

It is fair to assume that, of a body of men taken at hazard from the mass, and placed under the restraint (or rather the profession) of continence, a considerable portion, perhaps a third, will very early in their course throw off every thing but their hypocrisy, and become thoroughly profligate. The notorious condition of those countries where nothing has forbidden the natural expansion of the Romish system, would warrant our affirming that two-thirds of its clergy come under such a description. Nay, perhaps our English credulity would be ridiculed at Madrid, Grenada, Lisbon, Florence, Lima, or Rio Janeiro, if we presumed that any more than a very few of the sacerdotal class were not debauched.*

* The Romanist can have no more right to boast of the purity of the Catholic clergy of *England*, or to appeal to the manners (confessedly respectable) of English priests, as a fair specimen of the sacerdotal body, than modern deists have to take a parallel advantage of the mild temper and irreproachable character of some who now reject Christianity. To judge equitably of Deism, we must look at it where it has received no correcting influence from Christianity; and Popery must be judged on the same principle. We do not ask what Romish priests are, when surrounded by protestantism; but what where the system develops itself without restraint. Most readily and cheerfully is it granted that, notwithstanding the cruel disadvantages of his condition, the English priest is ordinarily correct in his behaviour, and estimable as a member of society.

Now if men of this sort are to be placed by the side of the licentious, out of orders, then the difference against them will consist in that aggravation of crime which his sacrilege and blasphemy heap upon the head of the Churchman. As violater and corrupter of every family about him, he makes his way, as if it were, through the presence chamber of the Eternal Majesty, and as he goes, he invites the Omniscient Purity to look upon his deeds of shame!

It cannot but happen that the dissolute priest, one hour surpliced and before the altar, and the next—where we must not follow him, should become intensely more wicked than the secular man of pleasure. So foul at heart will he become, that no enormity can distaste or alarm him. Not often are such men, fanatics in any sense; of enthusiasm they are incapable, and rancour is not their characteristic. Nevertheless, in times of general excitement, or at the call of superiors, and for the support of corporate interests, they will fall into their places around the scaffold, or the stake; and with much composure, if needed, lend their hands too in the work. Nay, human nature admits, when it has reached this stage of corruption, of an infernal frenzy: sensuality and cruelty in a moment collapsing—the herd of swine, suddenly seized by the demon of malice, rushes on; not themselves indeed to dash from the precipice, but to fall upon the innocent!

But there are more than a few, of a middle sort, who, though they may once and again have fallen under peculiar temptations, and so have lost that—*mens conscia recti*, which their vow should have

preserved, are nevertheless ordinarily retained in the path of virtue by the motives proper to their order, by a sense of professional decorum, by ecclesiastical pride, and by sentiments too which, for want of an unexceptionable turn, must be called — religious. We must stop short of a full explication of the state of feeling likely to grow out of a position such as this ;—it may however be said that human nature can hardly be placed in circumstances more pitiable or injurious. Altogether unlike it is the voluntary celibacy of secular men of similar constitution. The iron girdle of an irrevocable oath, galling the conscience, because a violated oath, and yet not to be laid aside—the Churchman's prudery of virtue, wounded to the quick by humiliating recollections, and the impulses of nature, fought off from disadvantageous ground, leave no tranquillity, and allow no repose within. Rather, a tempest of passion rages in the bosom—a tempest so much the more afflictive, because it may gain no vent.*

* It were better to sustain the imputation of advancing exaggerated statements, and of giving a stronger colour to an argument than the facts of the case would justify, than to do the uninitiated reader so serious an injury as to bring to light the evidence that bears upon this question. An appeal therefore is made to whoever has actually perused, or at least looked into, the ascetic writers, from Macarius, Ephraem, Palladius, and Cassian, downwards to those of the twelfth century. On the ground of the evidence which might, from those sources be adduced, a general result may be stated under three heads—namely,

1st. That the monastic vow and the life of celibacy FAILED TO SECURE THE PROFESSED OBJECT of the institution in all but a very few instances, and that it did not promote that purity of the heart which was acknowledged to be its only good end.

2d. That, beside the evil of cutting men off from the common

To the tumultuous stage of this mental conflict there may succeed, either a dead hopeless debility, pitiable to think of, or perversions of the mind still more sad. But if the character have more vigour, and does in fact repel the assailants that would tread it in the dust, such men will be found in a state of peculiar preparation for admitting malignant excitements. The very substance of the soul has become combustible, a spark kindles the material, and the passions blaze to heaven ! A settled feeling, difficult to define or describe, but which might be called a chronic revenge, of which humanity at large, and all forms of enjoyment are the objects, has become the habit of the mind, and is always in readiness to be shed forth upon whatever it may meet. Some alleviation of the inward torment is obtained by merely witnessing sanguinary scenes ; and the hidden anguish which has silently preyed upon the heart, is diverted, for an hour, while torture is in-

enjoyments, duties and sympathies of life, the work of maintaining and defending their chastity (exterior and interior) absorbed almost the whole energies of those who sincerely laboured at it :—so that to be chaste—in fact and in heart, was pretty nearly the sum of what the monk could do, even with the aid of starvation, excessive bodily toils, and depletic medicine—to say nothing of his prayers, tears, and flagellations.

3d. That the monastic institution, even during its earlier era, entailed the most deplorable miseries, and generated the foulest and most abominable practices ; so that, for every veritable saint which the monastery cherished, it made twenty wretches, whose moral condition was in the last degree pitiable, or loathsome.

Shall we leave these propositions unsupported by proof ?—or will the Romanist—the pride and prop of whose Church is monkery, challenge us to make good our allegations ?

flicted upon another ; and the woe of the soul, which might not express itself in words, or scarcely in sighs, seems to be vented in the groans of a victim !

Such transitions of strong and turbid emotions from one channel to another, are not unusual. Few sensitive minds can be at a loss in recalling analogous instances from the page of personal history. If the torrent of feeling is choked on one side, it swells and bursts a passage in another ; and strange as it may seem—not strange if we scrutinize attentively the structure of the passions, it is a fact, that the gentle affections of our nature have a specific tendency, when cut off from their natural flow, to take the turn of rancour and ferocity. The spirit baffled in its first desires, and defeated, not subdued, suddenly meets a new excitement, although of a different order, and combining with the novel element, rushes on, it knows not whither.

Will it seem paradoxical to affirm that some of the most portentous exhibitions of ungovernable violence that have been signalized in history, have been nothing but the out-bursting of some long suppressed passion, of another kind than that which appears ? We venture to say that certain extreme cases of religious ferocity might be explained on this principle, were we put in possession of the secret history of the individual ; and then the mystery of the union of virtue and piety (of a spurious kind) with a horrible cruelty of temper would be cleared up.* Could we delve in some spots of the earth's

* Mr. Butler strenuously denies the imputation ordinarily cast upon Guzman (Saint Dominic) of instigating and personally enacting the barbarities of the Crusade against the Albigenses.

surface far down towards its secret caverns, we might come upon the laboratory of nature, where chemical agents in constant turmoil, age after age, have convulsed the abyss—yet unfelt above. Low beneath some of the most tranquil and smiling landscapes, perhaps, where no such terror has ever been surmised, furious tempests of fire are continually shaking the infernal vault. But in a moment, by the heaving of the cavern, a new element rushes down, and egress too is gained : heat, tenfold more intense than before, is suddenly generated : the very bowels of the world swelter and are molten : the jagged jaws of the pit are sundered : torrents of fire rush up, and are flung to the clouds, and kingdoms are covered with dismay—

—We grant at once that our comparison, in appearance, goes beyond the occasion, and is disproportioned to the subject. But even if it were condemned as inappropriate, yet the truth remains certain, that the mischiefs occasioned by the most

It is probable that his conduct in this instance was in harmony with that of the Church generally, and especially of his spiritual progeny—the Inquisitors, who, abhorring to soil their own fingers with blood, delivered the condemned to the civil power to discharge the last “offices of Mercy.” We find modern Romanist writers far more discreet and cautious on points of this kind than were their predecessors of the sixteenth century. Thus while the Author of the *Lives of the Saints* takes pains to keep the reputation of St. Dominic clear of blood, an Italian annalist, speaking of the pontificate of Innocent III. plainly says, *Nacque allora l'eresia di Tolosa, che fu da S. Domenico ammortata.*—But how extinguished? Not until fire and the sword had converted the finest countries in Europe into a wilderness!

dire of volcanic eruptions have been trivial, if compared with the sorrows, and pains, and devastations, that have, in more than a few instances, sprung from the burning cavern of only a single human bosom ! What is the descent of a river of lava through vineyards and olive groves ; or what the overthrow of hamlets, and the burying of villages or castles, compared with the torments and imprisonments, the conflagrations, the famines, the exterminating wars, and the ages of national degradation, all of which have had so simple and narrow an origin as the fiery malice of a friar's heart ? Better were it, incomparably, for mankind, that a new volcano should heave itself from the abyss, and spout sulphur in the centre of every European kingdom, than that Dominicans and Franciscans, papal legates and Jesuits, should find leave to repeat the massacres and executions which so often have stained the soil of France, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, and Germany, and Holland, and England !

There is yet another, and a very different order of men, upon whom the vow of celibacy cannot fail to produce the most pernicious effects. We mean those stern natures that are, in a sense, pure and clean, yet not by poverty of temperament, but by hardness of mental structure. They are not cold as water, but cold as marble ; not solid as ice, but solid as iron. They shed no tears, and have no power of relenting, because there are no humours or lymph at all in their constitutions. Every nerve is a chord, stretched till it vibrates, and which will sooner snap than relax. There are born ■ few men

—men, for they have bones and muscles—senses and bodily organs, and especially do such make their appearance under the wing of gloomy superstitions, who, themselves exempt, as well from animal appetites as from social affections, and unconscious of the soft alternations of hope and fear, grief and joy, look with grim contempt upon humanity ; even as man may look upon the most ignoble of the brutal orders.

The state of celibacy, which costs such men no struggle, they will esteem their glory, as being a fit outward sign of the intrinsic dignity which lifts them above their fellows. Celibacy, to such, is but ■ visible seal of spiritual supremacy ; a scutcheon of nobility in the kingdom of heaven ! Conscious of immaculate personal sanctity (if continence be sanctity) and conscious, too, of a sort of ecstatic indifference under the voluntary pains of penance, floggings, fastings, and vigils, how can they doubt themselves to have reached the utmost summit of virtue ? Their virtue is seraphic, rather than human. Excellence such as this nothing can sully : as easily slur the bright sky of noon, as contaminate ■ piety so celestial !*

* It is surely more than a mere coincidence that the very age in which the folly of conferring celestial titles upon illustrious Churchmen reached its height, was the era also wherein the execrable intolerance of the papacy burst forth with the greatest fury.—While torrents of blood were flowing in the east and the west, at the instigation of spiritual heroes, the interior of the Church blazed with the superhuman virtues of ANGELICAL doctors, and SERAPHIC doctors—and so forth. And at the very moment that the duty of the civil power to aid the Church in the extermination of heretics and infidels was loudly

But of all the preparations for atrocious crime, none is more ominous than a presumption of possessing superhuman virtue. Sanctity of this heroic order may dip its hands in blood and fear no stain ! The holy arrogance of the soul, so long as it can be held entire, is a warrant that will cover all extents of guilt. There is no murder in murder, no falsehood in perjury, no sin in any sin, if but the perpetrator be inflate with the persuasion of himself being

preached, the fervours of the saints were reaching such a pitch (if we are to credit their devoted biographers) as often to lift them while in prayer many feet from the ground. "F. Leo the secretary of St. Francis (of Assisi) and his confessor, testified that he had seen him in prayer raised above the ground so high, that his disciple could only touch his feet, which he held and watered with his tears ; and that sometimes he saw him raised much higher."—*Lives of the Saints*, October 4. It was in one of these elevations that the saint received those far-famed stigmas of which his order have so much boasted—unless indeed we listen to the story which affirms that St. Francis and St. Dominic, while together at Rome, fell out, and actually proceeded to blows ; when the latter, seizing a spit, inflicted some severe wounds upon his unarmed friend. This story perhaps should be regarded as an allegory, intended to prefigure the hot animosities that afterwards prevailed between the ghostly progeny of the two Founders. It is remarkable that, besides other "bones of contention," these very stigmas became the subject of a fierce warfare between the rival orders ; the Dominicans having the audacity to claim for their Founder the very honour which the Franciscans had long thought their own without dispute.—But we have wandered from our purpose, and return to it to remind the reader that, at the very time when the miraculous wound in the (right) side of St. Francis was oozing gore, in attestation of his seraphic piety, the soil of Languedoc was soaking in the blood of the luckless inhabitants—blood shed at the instigation, or under the eyes of these same superhuman saints.

a demigod in goodness. Illusions such as these, egregious as they may seem, are not foreign to the human mind ; yet are not easily maintained by men who walk along with others upon the vulgar level of human interests ; whoever would be mad at this rate, must be neither citizen, nor neighbour, nor husband, nor father ; for the duties and offices of these relations teach even the most preposterous minds some common sense. It is celibacy and the cell that screen such infatuation, and that foment it.*

Surrounded as we are, in the present day, happily, by circumstances altogether of another sort, nothing less than a vigorous effort of the imagination will enable us to follow those links of transition by which, so often, the stern ascetic, whose devout meditations we may even now peruse with pleasure and advantage, has passed on to the fervours of a truculent zeal. These links are fewer than at first we might think. Let any one conceive himself to have laid down, as he may put off a garment, every social affection, remote and intimate, and to have thrown off every sympathy with what animates the open world, and to be mulct at once of manhood and humanity, and with a sort of desperate apathy to look down upon the theatre of life. Add to this supposition, the heats of a turgid piety, and then ask whether much would be wanting to open the way to the cruel or vindictive desires.

Or let any one entertain another supposition, as

* There are however exceptions. Simon de Montfort was bred, not in the cell but the camp ; and although, as Mr. Butler assures us, "his zeal and piety equalled him to the apostolic men ;" yet had he acquired it all in the open world !

for example, that, being arraigned on the indistinct ground of some political offence, in relation to which prejudice and passion have always so much scope, he stood at the bar, and saw his jury to consist of a dozen cowed anchorets, just summoned from their dens of morose meditation! Who would indulge a hope of receiving justice from such a band? Or would not a man shudder were he to descry only one such being among the twelve, and must he not believe that the pertinacious rancour of that one would effect his destruction?

Shall we pass from the light and air of an English court, to some mephitic cavern of the Holy Office?—an atmosphere in which Justice has never borne to remain even an hour, and in which Mercy never spoke.* The reverend assessors, with their obsequious

* The author will be thought to have forgotten that the great Ximenes de Cisneros presided eleven years in the court of the Inquisition. Did then neither Justice nor Mercy accompany the cardinal in his descents to the vaults of the Holy Office? Yes—the Justice and the Mercy of the Romish Church went with him there. By what rule are we to think of men—that of their professions, or that of their deeds? During the inquisitor-generalship of Ximenes, fifty thousand Moors, under terror of death and torture, received the grace of baptism! while more than an equal number of the refractory were condemned. Of these, two thousand five hundred and thirty-six, the cardinal burned alive. Or, supposing the whole number to have been evenly distributed through the period of his presidentship, it will appear, that, between Sunday and Sunday of every week of those years, he committed (to reject the odd two hundred and forty-eight) four, men or women to the flames! Let it be affirmed that in the “New Regulations,” some regard was paid to the rights of the accused; yet was the entire process a horrible snare, so

ministers, tools in hand, are, we will imagine, drawn in even proportions from the three classes just specified. To the right and left sit those of the first sort—the profligate lookers on, whose vote for the use of the rack and pulley has often had a motive more detestable than even the most horrid malice, and who hasten the consent of the court to a fatal sentence—that they may save the hour of some adulterous appointment. Next are those of our second class, in whose bosoms mingled passions, and irreconcilable desires, are beating like the waves of a tempest-troubled sea. To them this very hour of gloomy service is the season toward which tumultuous emotions have long been tending, as the time when they should get vent. It is then that the grinding torments of wounded pride or despair are to relax a while ; as if the culprit (Jew, or Moor, or heretic) who is to groan his hour upon the wheel, were to take up, as substitute, the anguish that grasps the heart of his judge ! We do not carry imagination too far ; it belongs to human nature thus to feel : the sight, and even the infliction of extreme suffering, loosens for a moment the gripe of internal distress. The vulture of remorse or

contrived as to render the escape of the victim almost impossible. Besides, is not reason insulted by talking at all of the justice *of the details* of a judicial process, the object of which was to maintain an execrable usurpation ? We may mourn indeed that a mind of fine quality should be found in company with a Torquemada ; but we must not so outrage the great principles of virtue as, on account of any talents or accomplishments, to screen one murderer of thousands, while we consign another to infamy.

revenge forgets his part, to glare upon other agonies, and rests appeased, in listening to another's sighs!

But what say we of the President of the Court? to him must be allowed the praise of loftier motives. Not since sunset of yesterday has he tasted bread, or moistened his shrivelled bloodless lip! Watching and prayer, though they have not spent him, have wrought up the fever of his pulse to a tremulous height, almost reaching delirium. Yet his front is settled and calm, and his eye glazed: and how is his spirit abstracted from mortal connexions! human sympathies are as remote from his soul as are the warmth, the fruits, and the pleasures of a sultry Syrian glen, from the glaciers and snow that encrust the summits of Lebanon. The communion of his soul is with the things of another world:—alas! not the world of love and joy; but the gulph of misery! In every sense, this terrible personage is the son and minister of hell! And now he comes from his cell to his chair that he may once more realize, in a palpable, visible, and audible form, those conceptions of pain, horror, revenge, perdition, upon which the monotonous meditations of his cloister are employed. The dark ideas that haunt his imagination, night and day, stoop the wing to this hour, in which the implements of anguish are to bring forth shrieks and groans, such as shall give new vividness to the fading impressions of misery which he delights to revolve.

How idle then is the hope entertained by the shuddering culprit, when, as brought up from his dungeon, he rapidly peruses each reverend visage in expectation of descrying on one, or upon another,

the traces of reason and mercy ! It is for this very purpose, and no other, it is to sigh, to shrink, to writhe, to shriek, that he has been dragged to the dim chamber of the Holy Office : he stands where he stands, because the men who sit to mock him with forms of law, have need—each in a special manner, of the spectacle of his misery !

Does the history of popish tyranny bear out, or does it refute our descriptions ? let them stand or be condemned by an appeal to records that are open to every eye.

We have not however quite done with the heavy theme of that preparation which the Romish Church has made for training her ministers to become the scourges of humanity : and let it be remembered, as we proceed, that ■ just horror of the *system* should generate so much the more pity for the *agents*, even with all their vices and cruelties, who, age after age, have undergone its influence. The doctrine and the institute we execrate : for the men we mourn.

It might seem as if circumstances so unfavourable to virtue and goodness as those already mentioned, could hardly admit aggravation : but in fact they have a climax. The practice of auricular confession would entail a thousand evils and dangers upon the parties concerned, even irrespectively of the unnatural condition to which one of these parties has been reduced. But what must be thought of auricular confession when he into whose prurient ear it is poured lives under the irritation of a vow of virginity ! The wretched being within whose bosom distorted passions are rankling, is called

daily to listen to tales of licentiousness from his own sex (if indeed the ambiguous personage has a sex) and, infinitely worse, to the reluctant, or the shameless disclosures of the other ! Let the female penitent be of what class she may, simple hearted, or lax, the repetition of her dishonour, while it must seal the moral mischief of the offence upon herself, even if the auditor were a woman, enhances it beyond measure when the instincts of nature are violated by making the recital to a man. But shall we imagine the effect upon the sentiments of him who receives the confession ? Each sinner makes but one confession in a given time, but each priest in the same space listens to a hundred ! What then, after a while must that receptacle have become into which the continual droppings of all the debauchery of a parish are falling, and through which the copious abomination filters ?

It is hard not to suppose that the Romish Church, in constituting her hierarchy, had wittingly kept in view the purpose of rendering her clergy the fit instruments of whatever atrocity her occasions might demand them to perpetrate ; and so had brought to bear upon their hearts every possible power of corruption. Not content with cashiering them of sanatory domestic influences, she has, by the practice of confession, made the full stream of human crime and corruption to pass—foul and infectious, through their bosoms ! Having to construct at discretion the polity of the nations, the Romish architects have so planned it, as that the sacerdotal order shall constitute the *Cloacæ* of the social edifice ; and thus they have secured for Rome

the honour of being, through these channels, the great Stercorary of the world ! How fitly then, in the language of prophetic vision is the apostate church designated, sitting as she does at the centre of the common drainage of Europe, as the Mother of abominations, and as holding forth, in shameless arrogance, the cup of the filthiness of her fornications !

Neither the oath of secrecy, nor the penalty which sanctions it, has prevented the disclosure of more than enough of the abominations of the Confessional. The discreet and well-informed Romanist will not challenge evidence in justification of the strong language which the Author uses on the subject : the Romanist, we presume, does not need to have certain notorious books named to him in which, with astounding insensibility, the Confessarius has divulged the mysteries of his art. Of one of these infamous books, a respectable Romish writer says, *Ce prodigieux volume contient un examen très subtil de toutes les impuretés imaginables ; c'est un CLOAQUE, qui renferme des choses horribles, et qu'on n'oseroit dire. On l'appelle avec justice un ouvrage honteux, composé avec un curiosité enorme, horrible et odieux par la diligence et l'exactitude qui y régné, à pénétrer dans des choses monstrueuses, sales, infâmes, et diaboliques. Il est impossible de comprendre comment un Auteur peut avoir renoncé à la pudeur jusqu'à pouvoir écrire un tel livre, puis qu'aujourd'huy un homme qui n'a pas despouillé toute honte pâtit effroyablement en le lisant. And again speaking of the same writer, . . . prodigioso volumine, velut CLOACA ingenti, fanda infandaque convolvit.*

The Church rigorously enjoins the faithful, as they would escape perdition, to make the most intimate and *circumstantial* disclosures of their guilt, without which, it says, the “sacred physician cannot be qualified to apply the proper remedy.” And we are not left in doubt as to the result. Constat enim, says the council of Trent, sacerdotes iudicium hoc, incognitâ causâ, exercere non potuisse, nec æquitatem quidem, illos in pœnis injungendis servare potuisse, si *in genera* dumtaxat, et non potius *in specie*, ac sigillatim sua ipsi peccata declarassent. Without the most unreserved confession, say these doctors, there is no hope of remission—qui secùs faciunt et scienter aliqua retinent, nihil divinæ bonitati per sacerdotem remittendum proponunt. Nor was it enough to disclose the mere *facts* of guilt; the Church must know *all circumstantials*; Colligitur prætereà, etiam eas circumstantias in confessione explicandas esse, *quæ speciem peccati mutant*.

The sacrament of confession, when it came to be thus explained and enjoined, naturally drew in upon the Church, in tenfold quantity, the impurities of licentious times. Heretofore, those chiefly had come to the priest who possessed some conscience and virtue, and whose disclosures were of a less flagrant sort. But afterwards, that is to say from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the custom of confession became universal; and the most abandoned of men—and women, retained superstition enough to desire absolution, and to seek it in this manner from the priest.—Accordingly we find

* See the fifth chapter of the decrees of the Council of Trent.

from this time abundant indications of the bad proficiency which the clergy made in the knowledge of every horrible enormity. On this point it might be enough to refer to the writings of Albert, bishop of Ratisbon—if a book which bears his name has not unjustly been attributed to him. But even long before the time when the SEWERS of the Church were thus deepened and widened, it is clear from abundant evidence that the practice of receiving private confessions had had great influence in depraving, both the secular and regular clergy, and in spreading on all sides a shameless and boundless licentiousness. It would be very easy, could it be done without offending the rules of propriety, to put this matter beyond dispute. Little more than the reputation and the conceit of sanctity could be left to men who, being themselves bound to single life (we must not call it chastity) were able to write what some noted fathers of the Church have written on offensive subjects. This sort of learning they frankly acknowledged themselves to have acquired at first or second hand from penitents ὥς πρὸς ἐμέ τις τῶν αἰδεσίμων καὶ πολιᾶ καὶ βίῳ παλαιὸς ἀνὴρ, ἐξομολογησαμένης πρὸς αὐτὸν γυναικὸς, ἀπεφθέγγετο . . nor is this a solitary instance in the same Father. The replies given by Basil to his monks on certain points of *discretion*, sufficiently attest the evils involved in the practice, even in its infant state;—who, by the way, goes all the length of the Council of Trent in demanding—from the monks at least, a discovery of even “the lightest movements of the soul,” and of “every secret of the heart;” and by means of an apt illustration, persuades them to a

throwing forth from the inner man, whatever is noxious.*

The Church of Rome is without doubt entitled to the pre-eminence we have given her, as the Nurse of sanguinary fanaticism. Her doctrine begets cruelty; her polity demands it; and her clerical institute trains her ministers to the service she has need of.

* How far, in the actual practice of the Romish Church, regard was paid to the temperament and character of the man in appointing the Confessarius, it is not easy to learn. But great care has been taken to prevent any but those *duly appointed*, from receiving confessions; and a care also to prevent promiscuous confession. A priest leaving his cure, or disabled by sickness from the discharge of his duties, named a substitute, to whom alone his penitents might unburden their consciences. Among the many instances that might be adduced in illustration of the rule, a somewhat curious one occurs in the minutes of the trial of the luckless Joan of Arc. Interroguée si elle se confessoit tous les ans, dit qu'ouy, à son propre curé, et s'il estoit empesché elle se confessoit à un autre prebste, par le congé dudict curé; nevertheless, and although the heroine could prove, qu'elle recevoit le corps de nostre Seigneur tous les ans à Pasques, she was, by her ferocious and hypocritical judges, condamnée à estre arse et bruslée, not for having fought in the cause of her country, but—comme hérétique.—*L'Histoire et Cronique de Normandie*.

To return for a moment to the influence of auricular confession upon the priest; Il (says Bayle), arrive à ces Critiques (upon Catullus and Martial) ce qui arrive aux Médecins et aux Chirurgiens, qui à force de manier des ulcères, et de se trouver exposez à de mauvaises odeurs, se font une habitude de n'en être point incommodés. Dieu veuille que les Confesseurs et les Casuistes, dont les oreilles sont l'Egout de toutes les immondices de la vie humaine, se pussent vanter d'un tel endurcissement! Il n'y en a que trop sans doute qui n'y parviennent jamais, et dont la vertu fait naufrage à l'ouïe des déréglemens de leurs pénitentes.

And that which the theory of this superstition would lead us to expect, history declares to have had actual existence. There is no other volume of human affairs that can, for the abundance of execrable acts, come into comparison with the story of the Papal tyranny. If the THEORY only of this system should go down to posterity, and its HISTORY be lost, no credit would be given to the affirmation that a scheme so unnatural had ever found a place in the world ; much less that it had maintained its influence over civilized nations during a longer course of ages than could be boasted by the firmest and most extensive secular monarchies. Or, if the HISTORY of the Romish Church were to descend to distant times, and the THEORY of the system be forgotten, then must it certainly be thought that, during the thousand years, or more, of its unbroken power, a licence extraordinary had been granted to infernal malignants to invade earth, with the practices of hell ; or that the world, from the seventh to the seventeenth century, had suffered a dark Millennium of diabolic possession !

But while at once the theory and the history of Popery are outspread before us, we are able, by using the latter as a comment upon the former, and the former as a key to the latter, to reconcile those notions of human nature and Divine Providence which we must devoutly cling to, with the hideous facts, that admit, alas ! of no dispute. The lesson we gain from such a digest as this, and one of more moment can hardly be found—That human nature, susceptible as it is of all influences, may, by long exposure to the operation of a pernicious code, an

immoral institute, and a despotic polity, become atrocious in a degree that confounds every distinction between human and diabolical wickedness. With how keen a jealousy then should we look—not only to the remains of that same system, near us, but to those deep principles of ghostly usurpation which are very far from having been crushed and destroyed, even in the freest of the European communities !

Yet, in the heat of our indignation, let justice be done to Rome : and this justice makes a demand upon us under several heads. The topics are trite, but must not here be omitted.

I. The specific guilt of the Papal tyranny is that of having converted to the purposes of its spiritual usurpation those congenial corruptions of faith and practice which it had received from a higher age, recommended by the unanimous approval of Saints, Doctors, and illustrious Writers. But neither popes, nor cardinals, nor councils, can fairly be accused, except in some less important instances, of originating—as if with malign ingenuity, the elements of the despotism which they administered. This main point of Church history has been too much obscured by Protestant controversialists.

II. At once as a relief to the sad impression of human nature, made by the history of popery ; and as a tribute too to the mighty efficacy of Christianity, even when moss corrupted, we have to keep in view the actual amount of virtue, and humanity, and piety ; and the learning, and the intelligence, and the bright excellence of every name, which has

existed in all ages, even the darkest, under the Papacy. Let us call this amount large, and indeed it is so; for assuredly the proofs of its extent would not soon be exhausted. We denounce the Romish doctrine and polity, not on the charge that it excludes all religion and all virtue; or that it renders the whole of its hierarchical body as corrupt as it renders many; but only on this ground—that it generates a species of ferocity more malign than any other system has produced; and that it never fails to have at its service a formidable number of inhuman beings, who want nothing but occasion to cover kingdoms with sorrow and blood.

III. Yet the main point to be regarded, in estimating the demerit of the Church of Rome is this—That, even if unrivalled in cruelty, she is not alone in it; but has been, if not eclipsed, yet followed by each offset Church, and by almost every Dissident community.* Those that have gone off to the remotest point of doctrine and polity, and whose rule of belief and duty has been, in every article, the antithesis of Rome; and those too that have filled the interval at every distance from the extremes;—all have wrought, in their day, the engine of spiritual oppression;—all have shown themselves, in the hour of their pride, intolerant and merciless; and all should look with shame to their several histories; while the Church of Rome looks—or might look to hers, with horror.

* It would be an injustice not to say that the Quakers are clear of this guilt; and to their many peculiar merits have added the praise of being, not only wise as serpents, but harmless as doves.

If nations, churches, and communities, as well as individuals, have ■ future retribution to fear ; then has almost every existing religious body a just cause of alarm. If a day is to come when the Righteous Administrator of human affairs, and Head of the Church, is to make manifest his detestation of ecclesiastical bloodshed and torments, shall the Church of Rome stand alone at the bar, or have no companions in punishment ? We ought to think more worthily of the Justice of Heaven than to suppose it.

Leaving so high a theme, let the general inference be clearly drawn—That gloomy doctrines and pernicious schemes of polity are therefore to be execrated, because, even without them, or where every influence is the most favourable, human nature scarcely avoids abusing the profound excitements of religion as the incentives or the pretexts of its malignant passions.

SECTION VII.

FANATICISM OF THE BANNER.

WE seem to breathe again in escaping from the Consistory to the Camp. Without staying to inquire whether the greater sum of positive evil has been inflicted upon mankind by the fanatical priest, or by the fanatical soldier, it is certain that the sentiments with which we contemplate the one course of action are vastly less oppressive than those excited by the other.

Let but the energies of men be spent upon a broad field, and under the open sky; and let them but have to do with interests not of one kind only, but of many; and let but their motives of action embrace the principal impulses of our nature; and especially, let those who run such a course freely expose themselves to the perils and sufferings of the enterprise, and then it will always happen that admirable talents and fine qualities find play—talents and qualities such as are neither seen nor thought of within the shades of sacred seclusions, or in ecclesiastical halls.

None but minds imbued with the darkest

fanaticism can feel any complacent sympathy with the character and deeds of sacerdotal despots ; on the other hand there are few minds so frigid, or so pure, as not to kindle in following the story of exploits which—criminal as they may have been in their object and issue, yet sparkle with instances of valour, and are graced with the choicest examples of fortitude, mercy, and magnanimous contempt of selfish interests.

And besides ; there is this disparity between the fanaticism of the Churchman and that of the Soldier, that while the oppressions and cruelties practised by the former are in all cases, and under every imaginable condition—an ATROCITY, destitute of palliation or excuse, the deeds of the other have often been instigated by motives which go far to soften our disapproval. In truth there are certain instances of this class of so ambiguous a kind, that we must shrink, if called upon to say decisively whether the actors should be commended or condemned. It is easy and trite to affirm that aggressive and ambitious warfare is always immoral, and how flagrant is the guilt of aggressive war, waged under sacred banners, or at the alleged bidding of Religion ! But often the question of national existence has been inseparably connected with the question of faith ; and the alternative of a people has been to crouch and to perish ; or to defend by the sword at once their homes and altars. He must be a stern moralist indeed who, in such cases, would without reluctance pronounce a verdict which must make the oppressor exult, and the oppressed despond.

Compared with either of the two forms of fanaticism described in the preceding sections, that now to be considered is remarkable on account of its diversified combinations with other sentiments. Patriotism and national pride, calculations of policy, the motives of trade, the desire of plunder, and the impulse of personal passions—the resentments or the ambition of chiefs, have all come in to mingle themselves with that more profound excitement which gave the first impulse to wars on account of religion. On the ground we have hitherto traversed, every object almost has shown the darkest colours, and has repelled the eye by a sombre and horrid uniformity: we have been making way through a valley of grim shadows, or a region illumined only by the fires which cruelty has lit up ;—

Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatu,
 Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris ;
 Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes
 Tendere iter pennis.—
 Vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci,
 Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curæ ;
 Pallentesque habitant Morbi, tristisque Senectus,
 Et Metus, et malesuada Fames, et turpis Egestas,
 Terribiles visu formæ ; Letumque Labosque ;
 Tum consanguineus Leti Sopor, et mala mentis
 Gaudia—

But from these regions of woe we are to emerge ; and the prospect at once brightens with the pomp and movement of great enterprises. Empires are mustered on the ground, and the nations of a continent, in the gaiety of their various attire, and with banners spread to the wind, are pouring on from side to side of the field. Or in other quarters, if clouds

hang over the scene of action, yet there the constancy of human nature is showing itself in deeds such as no other fields of war can boast.

If then hitherto the danger has been, lest we should admit feelings of resentment toward our fellows, or of disgust, such as the spirit of the Gospel does not allow; the danger now is, lest a complacency should be awakened which the inflexible maxims of its morality cannot but condemn.

The Romish superstition has afforded an instance unparalleled of the fanaticism of cruelty; but for an example, equally signal, of the fanaticism of martial zeal and religious ambition, we must turn to the story of the first propagation of the doctrine of Mohammed.

To profess a jealousy toward the Mohammedan faith, as if it had any merits which might perhaps rival those of Christianity, would be a ridiculous affectation; or actually to feel any such jealousy, would indicate an extreme imbecility of judgment. The time surely is gone by in which it might be necessary to demonstrate that the Bible exhibits every quality fitting a revelation from God—the Koran none! or none after deducting the materials stolen by its author from the Prophets and the Apostles. The balance of truth is certainly in no jeopardy in this instance; and therefore, without solicitude, we may do justice, as well to the founder, as to the first propagators of the religion of the eastern world.

In fairness, it should never be attempted to bring Mohammed into comparison with Him who came “not to destroy men’s lives, but to save.” Nothing

but a summary condemnation of the military zealot and of his Caliphs, could be the issue of such a contrast ; this contrast therefore being put out of view, many circumstances demand to be considered that should mitigate at least the feelings with which we are accustomed to regard the rise and spread of Islam.

Those tides of the northern nations which at length swept away the Roman greatness, might be spoken of as mere evolutions of the physical energies of the great social system ; or as acts in the natural history of man, the recurrence of which, at intervals longer or shorter, may be looked for, unless prevented by opposing causes of another order. It ought not to be deemed utterly incredible that the very same regions which heretofore have poured their ruinous torrents over southern Europe and Asia, may again do so. On the contrary, must it not be admitted as more than barely possible, that the decay of the commercial and military greatness of England and France, the only European nations that now efficiently sustain the civilization of the world, would, were it ever to take place, quickly be followed by a Scythian inundation, such as would leave—in this hemisphere at least, scarce a vestige of intelligence, and none of liberty ?

Now certainly in this sense it must not be affirmed that the Saracenic conquests were merely natural expansions of a superabundant force ; for an eruption from the same quarter has happened only once in the history of the world ; nor does it appear that it would have happened at all, apart from the reli-

gious impulse whence actually it sprang. Had not the Merchant of Mecca penetrated the seventh heaven, and brought down thence a spark which set the ambition of Arabian bosoms in a blaze, the very name of Saracen, with all the splendours that surround it, had barely found a place on the page of history. Without Mohammed, the Bedoween horsemen had probably continued, age after age, to sweep their native deserts, a terror only to traders and pilgrims.

This being admitted, and while it is fully granted that the motive generated by the new religion was the real incentive of the Mohammedan outbreak, the support of its fortitude, the spring of its courage, and the reason of its success; it is nevertheless true, that a race so prince-like and so bold as that which occupied the Arabian wilderness, when once put in movement, and made to feel its actual, as well as its relative strength, would necessarily conquer as it did conquer, and spread itself abroad where nothing then existed that could match its force. The countries to the north, to the east, and to the west, lay as a rich inheritance, of which the actual possessors had lost their title, by extreme degeneracy, and which seemed to ask to be seized upon by men—men worthy to enjoy it. The Saracenic conquests as we assume—though not in the same sense as those of the northern barbarians, partook of a physical quality; and if, in the main, they were conquests of proselytism, they were also natural development of national energies over a surface which superstition and luxury had long before vanquished.

But leaving this ground, there is room to inquire whether the project of bringing, or of driving the much-corrupted nations by force and terror into the path of truth, might not seem, to an ardent spirit—and to Mohammed, both lawful and noble.

Possessed of the first elements of theology—who shall say in what manner obtained? and standing in the position which he occupied, surrounded, at hand, by polytheism, and, more remotely, by the ruins of three fallen religious systems, was it strange that Mohammed should have deemed the sword an instrument of necessary severity, and the only instrument which could be trusted to for efficaciously reforming the world? In listening to the apology* which the Prophet himself offers for the use of arms as a means of conversion, the belief at least is suggested that he had mused in a comprehensive manner upon the religious history, and the actual condition of mankind, and had deliberately come to the belief that the honour of the True God in this benighted world was lost for ever, unless at length it

* It is by no means always easy (and still less through the medium of a translation) to follow the chain of the Prophet's reasonings or meditations; and the difficulty is increased by that ambiguity under which, from evident motives of policy, he skreened his real meaning whenever he had to speak of the Jewish and Christian economies, the votaries of which he aimed if possible to conciliate. Notwithstanding these obscurities, some mode of thinking, such as that assumed above for Mohammed, makes itself dimly apparent in many passages of the Koran; among others, the 42d and the four following chapters may be referred to. An under-tone of apology, in which, without compromising his authority as the apostle of God, he excuses his measures as founder of a religion, runs through the rambling incoherences of the Koran.

might be restored by the scourge of war.* Mohammed had perhaps convinced himself that so holy a purpose would well excuse any means that might bring it about. Christian doctors have entertained the same principle, and have made a much worse use of it ; for assuredly we must hold the fabrication of miracles to be a baser immorality than the use of force, employed because the pretension to miracles was scorned : and again, are not the judicial murders perpetrated by spiritual despots in their caverns of blood, more horrid than the open carnage of the field ?

Looking round upon the world, such as it was in the seventh century, what appeared to have been the result of the several successive endeavours to reclaim the nations from their inveterate superstitions, and their idolatries ? Not to insist upon the then decayed state of the religion of Zoroaster, Mohammed saw his countrymen, as well as many of the more luxurious people of Asia, deep sunk in the follies of polytheism. And some of these nations had fallen far back from the position they once occupied.†

The theology and institutions of Moses, after struggling to exist on a single and narrow spot through a long course of ages, were then to be discerned only here and there in fragments, scattered over the world, like the broken embellishments and

* “ And if God did not repel the violence of some men by others, verily monasteries, and churches, and synagogues, and the temples of the Moslems, wherein the name of God is frequently commemorated, would be utterly demolished. And God will certainly assist him who shall be on his side : for God is strong and mighty.”—*Koran*, chap. 22.

† “ Say, Go through the earth, and see what hath been the end of those who have been before you ; the greater part of them were idolaters.”—*Koran*, chap. 30.

gilded carvings of a palace, which some lawless rout has overthrown and pillaged, strewing the earth with shining atoms of the spoil. Did it indeed then appear as if Jehovah, the God of Abraham, had any purpose in reserve for converting the world by the agency of the Jewish people? Rather it seemed that the obdurate race was, in every religious sense, thrown aside and forgotten as a broken instrument.*

Even a mind much more enlightened than that of Mohammed—as we are accustomed to think of him, might, while looking at christendom in the seventh century, have come to the conclusion that the fate of the religion of Christ, after an experiment on a large scale, carried on through six hundred years, forbade it to be any longer hoped that the mild means of instruction would permanently avail to support, or to extend truth in the world. A pure theology, and a pure morality, sanctioned by miracles, had, as a system, apparently spent itself, nay, had become worse than impotent, for it had covered the territories of ancient civilization with the rank growth of superstition, so that idolatries, more degrading than the ancient polytheism, because men—not divinities, were the objects of it, had taken full possession, as well of the eastern as the western nations.† Could any other event, at that time, well be looked for but the speedy extinction of even the name

* “The likeness of those who were charged with the observance of the law (the Jews) and then observed it not, is as the likeness of an ass laden with books.”—*Koran*, chap. 62.

† The fifth chapter of the *Koran* affords evidence that Mohammed was well aware of the degeneracy of the Christian world. “The Christians have forgotten what they received from God.”

of Christianity, and the giving way of the feeble barriers which still preserved the south from the savage forms of worship of the Scythian hordes? Mohammed, or if not he, any thoughtful observer, might with reason have regarded the human family as then hastening down a slippery descent towards the abyss of ignorance and utter atheism. He might thus have thought, and his inference would be, that the use of even the most violent means was lawful and good, if so the catastrophe of the race might be prevented.

It should be regarded as a hopeless endeavour to determine, without doubt, what was the personal character of Mohammed. The supposition that he was a sheer Fanatic is opposed, if not altogether excluded, by the description that has been left us of the suppleness of his public conduct, of the courteousness of his manners, and of the ready and well-judged adaptation of his means of influence to the sudden and various occasions of the enterprise he had taken in hand. This supposition, moreover, can scarcely be reconciled with the fact of his having sustained fraudulent pretensions, and of propagating delusions of which he could not have been himself the dupe. On the other hand, as well the Koran (although itself a vast plagiarism—a booty, rather than the fair fruit of mental labour) and the political and military conduct of Mohammed, bespeak an elevated and impassioned soul. Those have not looked into that book, or perused the story of the Prophet's public life, who can think him a vulgar impostor, or believe that subtlety and craft were the principal elements of his character. If it be true

that the author of the Koran has stolen his materials ; yet must a man have had greatness of soul, to have stolen as he has done. If, on the rich fields of sacred literature, he plundered—he plundered like a prince. The spoil which he gathered so largely from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures,* might be likened to that with which certain learned and munificent conquerors have graced their triumphs : they have indeed trampled upon and overthrown the ancient seats of arts and learning ; but yet have first snatched from the devastations of war, each signal monument of greatness and beauty.

Were it necessary at any rate to offer some solution of the ambiguous facts of Mohammed's character, recourse might be had to the principle, that a mixture of incongruous moral elements does often take place by means of a silent violence, done to reason, every day, within the bosom. A wise and tranquil mind will not rest until it has adjusted its rules of action, and has determined what are to be its ruling motives, and has chosen its objects ; and—whether on the best model or not, has brought the interior man into a state of harmony and order. But there are minds, perhaps energetic and rich in sentiment, which, conscious of the utter incompatibility of their

* It has been questioned whether Mohammed had ever seen the Christian Scriptures. That they were familiar to him it is impossible not to believe in reading the Koran. Even if the actual books had not come under his eye, the phraseology and sentiments of the evangelists and apostles he was certainly not ignorant of; these were to be met with everywhere, both in the east and the west. An example of the sort of garbled allusion to the very text of the New Testament which abounds in the Koran may be seen at the close of chap 48.

leading impulses, wilfully abstain from the endeavour to reconcile the springs of action. Despairing to reach, or not even wishing to reach, that unity of soul which virtue and wisdom delight in, they act, and think, and speak in alternate characters. Now the better, and now the worse interior personage assumes the hour, and struts upon the stage. Meanwhile the wondering world gaze perplexed, and disagree upon the enigma—whether the man be sage or sophist—hero or poltroon.*

Such perhaps was Mohammed: assuredly not truly wise and honest, any more than a sheer impostor. But whatever the Originator of the new profession might be, many of his companions and immediate successors—his vicars, possess an unquestionable claim to the praise of sincerity and genuine fervour; and they have left to the admiration of posterity some of the rarest examples of greatness of soul. If Christianity were at all im-

* Certain zealous—should we say *jealous* divines have seemed to think Christianity safe only when Mohammed was crushed under the weight of their anathemas. This mode of feeling one does not so much wonder to meet with among those whose position placed them in actual rivalry with the Moslem faith. It is quite natural to hear a Spaniard—a Spanish priest—an inquisitor, speak of Mohammed as—*engañador del mundo, Profeta falso, nuncio de Satanas, el peor precursor del Anti-christo, cumplimiento de todas las heregias, y prodigio de toda falsedad*; or to say all in a word—*un demonio encarnado*.—*F. J. Bleda, Historia del Falso Profeta Mahoma*. The same writer, inquisitor as he was, does not wonder that pestilences, and earthquakes, and atmospheric prodigies attended the birth of an impostor who was to propagate his religion by violence, and to persecute the Church! The Church, at least the writer's Church, amply took its revenge in the same kind.

plicated in the comparison, which it is not, even remotely, we should shrink from a contrast between the Crusaders of the twelfth century, and the Caliphs of the seventh and eighth.*

Without doubt every essential characteristic of fanaticism belonged to the temper and conduct of the Moslem leaders ; nevertheless it is certain that the military religious maxims, and the usages of war established, and generally adhered to, by the Saracenic conquerors, were by no means such as comport with the indiscriminate and unconditional ferocity of men thoroughly rancorous, or natively cruel ; it was far otherwise. Ordinarily—for instances must be excepted, the genuine zeal of proselytism prevailed over the fury of war : if fanaticism ran through the exploits and policy of the martial zealots, it was still a fanaticism that leaned more to the side of enthusiasm, than of malice, and that readily admitted a generosity which the ecclesiastic, when he takes the sword, seldom thinks of, and which the soldier as seldom forgets. Or, to speak a volume in a word, the fanaticism of the Mohammedan conquests was that of warriors, not that of monks.

Common motives of policy, to the exclusion of

* The perusal of Mohammedan history has a useful tendency in breaking down the prejudice which leads us to appropriate the common virtues to certain modes of thinking. Genuine piety demands indeed a *genuine belief* as its source and support. But those excellences of conduct and character which may exist apart from Absolute Truth are to be met with all the world over ; and certainly the Moslem nations have produced their share of shining examples. That mixture of crimes and virtues which belongs to history generally, is met with as well in Ferishta as in William of Tyre.

sincere motives of religion, will by no means suffice to account for the rule early adopted by Mohammed, and adhered to by his immediate successors, of offering to IDOLATERS no other choice than that of conversion or death ;* while any who professed the worship of the one God, whether Jews or Christians, might purchase by tribute the liberty to go, unhurt and at leisure, on their own path to perdition.† So long as the doctrine of the Divine Unity was but acknowledged, errors of profession were tolerated ; and if the tribute laid upon conscience was heavy, it did not exceed the measure customary with Asiatic conquerors. The lenity thus shewn by Mohammed to the followers of Moses and of Christ, places his conduct in contrast with that of most zealots, whose rule has been to spend their indulgence upon whoever stood most remote in faith from their standard ; while all the stress of their inexorable spite was made to pend upon the sectarists of the next shade. Let the Arabian prophet be called Heresiarch and Impostor ; yes, but he was a Reformer too. He kindled, from side to side of the eastern world, an extraordinary abhorrence of idol worship, and actually cleansed the plains of Asia from the long-settled impurities of polytheism. Did he overthrow Christianity in Syria, in Africa, in Spain ? no, Superstition only ; for Christianity had died away from those countries long before.

A respect for man, for nature, for God ; a respect not characteristic of the frenzied zealot, was shewn in the injunction so strictly laid upon the Moslem armies—Not to destroy the fruits of the earth, not

* As in chaps. 48 and 9.

† Koran, chap. 9.

to disturb the labours of the husbandman, not to cut down the grateful palm or the olive, not to poison or to stop the wells ; to spare the old and the young, the mother and her babes, and in a word, to abridge war, as far as might be done, of its horrors. In reading these military orders, and in following the march of the caliphs who received them, it is impossible to exclude from the mind the recollection of wars raged by Christians—"most Christian" kings—not against distant and equal foes, but upon their own unoffending and helpless subjects ; wars which left nothing behind them but smoking ruins and a blood-sodden wilderness. Call Mohammed fanatic or impostor ; but language wants a term, or if it might afford one, the rule of Christian propriety would forbid it to be used, which should fitly designate the Philips, the Ferdinands, the Louises of our modern European history.

The Caliphs possessed an incalculable advantage, as compared with the Leaders of the Crusades, in not being the tools or agents of a sacerdotal class ; but in uniting in their single persons every office that naturally commands the submission of mankind. The combination of the regal or patriarchal, the military, and the sacred functions, in one office, whatever inconveniences it may have entailed, yet served to attemper and to invigorate each. The same venerated personage, now calmly administering justice as civil chief, now fired with valour and at the head of armies ; and now, strange spectacle, enforcing, from the pulpit, the principles and duties of religion, would be likely, in recollection of his alternate characters, to exercise the first office at

once with a religious impartiality and a martial firmness ; the second with humanity, and the third with a liberality of feeling larger than belongs to the ecclesiastic, and borrowed from the sentiments proper to the king and the captain. At the same time the people would be apt to look—to their civil Chief with a religious affection, to their General with the confidence of faith, and to their Teacher, as to one whose words carried all the authority which Heaven and earth together can confer.

If Christianity be not answerable, as certainly it is not, for the arrogance and the crimes of princes and prelates bearing Christian titles ; so neither should we call in question the religious system of Mohammed on account of the horrors and devastations that attended the Tartar conquests of a later period. This rule of equity kept in view, we have to look simply to the Koran and to the general conduct of its early promulgators.—

—And after every due extenuation has been admitted, nothing can be said but that the martial zeal of the Moslem was an egregious fanaticism. The rise and the characteristics of this vehement impulse is a proper object of curiosity.

In not generating a pure philanthropy Mohammedism was not worse than other false religions ; nor, in this respect was it better. Notwithstanding its just praise of teaching—and with much clearness and energy, the great first principle of theology, it quite failed of producing that good-will to man which is the proper consequence of love to God. To profess to love God, while, on any pretext, we entertain a rancorous contempt of our fellow-men, is the

most enormous of all inconsistencies. No ingenuity of the theologian can make it seem reasonable that those, however depraved in faith or manners, toward whom the Universal Parent, as Creator and Preserver, is shewing kindness, and whom He loads daily with his benefits, should be regarded by the worshippers of God with a bitterness which God himself does not display. Men who, like ourselves, are inhaling the vital air, are enjoying animal existence, are receiving nourishment from food, are sleeping and are waking refreshed from their beds, such, whatever may be their errors or their crimes, are not yet, it is manifest, shut out from the pale of the Divine Indulgence : God has not yet cursed them : how then can we dare anticipate His wrath ? The feeling that would prompt us so to do, or the dogmas that would seem to justify such a feeling, must be false and wrong. Yet this capital flaw attached from the first to the religion of the Prophet.

A knowledge of God is found to avail little apart from the knowledge of ourselves, and unless some genuine emotions of contrition have broken down the pride of the heart, the abstract truth of the Divine Unity seems only to inflame our arrogance, and to prepare us to be inexorable and cruel. So it was in the system of Mohammed ; it had no true philanthropy, because it had no humiliation, no penitence, and no method of propitiation.*

* The phrase "God will favour the true believers and forgive their sins," very often occurs in the Koran. But the doctrine of pardon, and the feelings connected with it, are nowhere expanded or defined. Final salvation turns entirely upon personal merit ; see chap. 23. At the last day, "they whose balances

The Koran does indeed teach and inspire a profound reverence toward God ; and it has actually produced among its adherents, and in an eminent degree, that prostration of the soul in the presence of the Supreme Being which becomes rational creatures. But at this point it stops :—moslem humiliation has no tears ; and as it does not reach the depths of a heartfelt repentance, so neither is it cheered by that gratitude which springs from the consciousness of pardon. No sluices of sorrow are opened by its devotions ; the affections are not softened : there is a feverish heat among the passions ; but no moisture. Faith and confidence toward God are bold rather than submissive, and the soul of the believer, basking in the presumption of divine favour, might be compared to the scorched Arabian desert, arid, as it is, and unproductive, and liable too to be heaved into billows by the hurricane.

No other religious system has gone so far in quashing that instinct of guilt and shame which belongs to man as a transgressor, and which impels him to look for some means of propitiation. The divine favour is secured by the Koran to whoever makes hearty profession of the unity of God, and the apostleship of Mohammed. Almsdeeds, punctuality in acts of devotion, and above all, valour in the field,

shall be heavy with good works, shall be happy : but they whose balances shall be light, are those who shall lose their souls, and shall remain in hell for ever." Repentance, in the sense of the Koran, means turning from idolatry to the true faith, see chap. 9. Or if, as in chap. 4, the word be used in a broader sense, yet is the range allowed to contrition very limited. Nothing like a system of propitiation is contained in Mohammed's theology.

exclude every doubt of salvation. Not a sentiment found place that could open the heart to the upbraidings of the conscience. Islam is the Religion of Pride ; and therefore was well fitted to become the religion of the sword.*

We should not omit to notice the contrast which presents itself between the Moslem and Christian systems on this capital point. All religious history may be appealed to in attestation of this averment, that the Christian doctrine of forgiveness of sins is the only one which has ever generated an efficacious and tender-spirited philanthropy. It is this doctrine, and no other, that brings into combination the sensitiveness and the zeal necessary to the vigour of practical good-will toward our fellow-men. Exclude this truth, as it is excluded by sceptical philosophy, and then philanthropy becomes a vapid matter of theory and meditation. Distort it with the Church of Rome, and the zeal of charity is exchanged for the rancour of proselytism. Quash it, as the Koran does, and there springs up in the bosoms of men a hot and active intolerance. The Christian (and he alone) is expansively and assiduously compassionate ; and this, not merely because he has been formally enjoined to perform the seven works of mercy ; but because his own heart has been softened, throughout its very substance ; because tears have become a usage of his moral life ; and because he has obtained

* "O prophet! God is thy support, and such of the true believers who follow thee.—O prophet! stir up the faithful to war: if twenty of you persevere with constancy, they shall overcome two hundred," &c. *Koran*, chap. 8. "Verily God loveth those who fight for his religion in battle array." Chap. 61.

a vivid consciousness of that divine compassion, rich and free, which sheds beams of hope upon all mankind.

The correspondence is natural and real, though it may not be obvious, between the notions entertained of the joys of heaven, and the conceptions that are formed of the world of punishment : the latter article of belief takes its quality inversely from the former. Is it not seen in every country that the palace and the dungeon are correlatives ? Wherever the one is filled with extravagant and shameless debauchery, the other is found to be furnished with racks, and will be the abode of forgotten despair. And so the sensualities of Mohammed's paradise are borne out by parallel horrors, gross and barbaric, which, in the speciality of the description given of them, could not fail highly to inflame the malignant passions.* This irritating influence reached a pitch of frenzy upon the field of battle ; for there, the question of salvation or damnation lay on the ground between the marshalled armies, to be fought for and carried by the stronger arm. Never perhaps in the history of mankind have the appalling ideas of the invisible world so much, and so distinctly mingled with the fury of mortal strife as in the instance of Moslem warfare. To the eye of the Saracen the smoke of the infernal pit appeared to break up from the ground in the rear of the infidel lines, and its sulphurous steam obscured the embattled field. As the squadrons of the faithful moved on to the charge, that pit yawned to receive the miscreant host ; and in chasing the foe, the champions of God and his prophet fully

* An adduction of the passages may well be excused.

believed that they were driving their antagonists down the very slopes of perdition. When at last steel clashed upon steel, and the yell of death shook the air, the strife was not so much between arm and arm, as between spirit and spirit; and each deadly thrust was felt to pierce the life—at once of the body and of the soul !

Hatred, which is softened by contempt toward a fallen and unresisting foe, is embittered by the same feeling so long as opposition is offered. To respect our adversary is to admit those sentiments of generosity which spring from the interchanged sympathies of virtue ; but to loathe him, is to resent his hostility as an impudent presumption that assails our personal honour. The Arabian armies, after the Peninsula itself had been conquered, scarcely encountered an enemy that they did not look upon with a just disdain. The prophet had already told them that misbelievers were dogs ; and every excursion they made beyond their native deserts served to verify his words. The human race had become, in that age, effeminate and debauched in an unexampled degree. Superstition, with its idle solicitudes, its mummeries, and its despotism, had at length thoroughly worked itself into the mind of the, once, Christian nations, both of the east and west.* The profligacy

* Mohammed, it is certain, drew his knowledge of Christianity and of Christians chiefly from the neighbouring country—Egypt, where perhaps, more than any where else, superstition had vilified humanity, and had converted every principle of religion into a preposterous folly. The conquest of Egypt fixed upon the minds of the Caliphs their contempt of the professors of the Gospel.

which attends a decaying empire, and the hypocrisy of monkish virtue, had joined together in the work of debasing and enfeebling every principle of human action. The sound sense and the virtue proper to that "common life" against which all the doctors of the Church, during four centuries, had inveighed, and from which they had effectively removed every corroborative and elevating motive, had disappeared; no healthy mean, no sound and solid foundation, remained to support the social structure. The objects that met the eye in the countries swayed by the Byzantine emperors were the cowed tenants of the monastery, or the debauched retainers of palaces, or the faithless and insubordinate soldiers of the mercenary legions.

When the princely men of the Arabian desert, great as they were in a steady physical courage, great in a condensed and sententious energy of understanding, and great in simplicity of manners; a simplicity not rude but poetic;—when these heros-born, broke their limits, and trod the open world, their feeling must have been like that of a veteran garrison which, having believed itself to be hemmed in by superior forces, at last descends from its citadel, and in scouring the plains and woods around, meets only with frightened herds and flocks. To dispossess nations so unworthy of the bounties of nature, to overthrow governments so corrupt; and especially, to rid the world of superstitions so absurd and foul, might seem to be a work worthy of the servants of God.

The martial fanaticism of the Saracenic armies presents a contrast on almost every point, if compared

with that of the Crusaders. Both in the elements and in the circumstances, these religious enterprises are dissimilar. The zeal of the Moslem armies was a passion for proselyting the world; that of the Crusaders was a mixed sentiment, drawing its force from historic recollections, from the desire of revenge, from the influence of superstition, and from grosser impulses of cupidity and ambition. The Caliphs waged war upon what they deemed Religious Error, wherever found; and the task they undertook was to vanquish the souls of men, and to drag them captive to the throne of the True God: the intention of these chiefs, although misinformed, was elevated and comprehensive. But the Crusaders—so far as their motive was religious, thought only of a local conquest, and of a definite triumph: give them but possession of a certain cave in the suburb of an unimportant dilapidated town, and their ambition reached its end! Moreover the enterprise to recover the Holy City, though aggressive in its aspect, was also in a sense defensive; for not merely did the Christian nations seek protection on behalf of their pilgrims, but they desired to regain an inestimable possession which Christendom, by every claim of history and of feeling, might challenge as its own.

In attendant circumstances also the two enterprises greatly differed. As the one was an emanation from a centre over a wide surface, and the other a rushing in from a wide surface toward a single point; so the characteristic of the first was the grandeur of simplicity; that of the second, the magnificence of accumulation. There was a harmony, sublime as terrible, in the early diffusion of

the religion of Mohammed: the never-conquered Arab—the same being in all ages and climates, and less liable than other men to admit modifications of his opinions or manners from foreign sources, presented himself haughtily on the frontier of every land, Africa, Spain, Persia, India, China; and in the same stern, sententious language, summoned all men to surrender faith, or liberty, or life.

But the Crusades poured a feculent deluge, upheaved from the stagnant deeps of the European communities, upon the afflicted Palestine. The dregs, the scum, and the cream of the western world, its nobility, and its rabble, in promiscuous rout, flowed toward the sepulchre at the foot of Calvary. The Saracenic conquests might be compared to a sun-rise in the tropics, when the deep-azured night, with its sparkling constellations, is almost in a moment exchanged for the glare of day; and when the fountain of light not only darts his beams over the heavens, putting the stars to shame; but, with a tyrannous fervour, claims the world as his own. The Crusades might be better resembled to the tornado, which, sweeping over some rich polynesian sea, and rending up all things in its course, heaps together upon a distant shore the confused wrecks of nature and of human industry.

The motley host that dragged its length across the plains of the lesser Asia was not more diverse in its blazonments and banners, than were the motives of the crowd various; and the many-coloured embellishments of the enterprise, as they glittered in the sun under the walls of Nice, or of Antioch, might be regarded as symbolizing the heterogeneous

impulses that had brought so many myriads from their homes. But the accessory motives, whether of the chiefs or the rabble, do not belong to our subject: the spirit of adventure, the secular ambition, the cupidity, or the superstition, are to be set off as accidents merely of that genuine infatuation which, at intervals during nearly two hundred years, convulsed the European nations.

If there had been no crusade in the age of ignorance, would there have been one in the age of knowledge? We dare not affirm such a conjecture to be probable; and yet would not affirm it to be altogether groundless. The follies, the miseries, and the ill success that attended the endeavour of the European states to possess themselves of a land in which they had every right sentiment can confer, have branded with reprobation an enterprise that otherwise might have seemed not unreasonable, even to the men of more enlightened times. Let the case be stated abstractedly:—That the most powerful nations of the world—a great community of nations, professing the same faith, should patiently see, on their very border, a land every foot of which had become memorable by association with the events of their religion, trodden down by an inimical superstition, while themselves were barely indulged with leave of setting foot upon it—is a fact that would not have been thought probable; and which, we almost believe, would not to the present time have been endured, if the frenzy of the twelfth century had not affixed an indelible contempt upon the project of reclaiming the birth-place of Christianity for christendom.

Had there been no crusade in the twelfth century, there might then, we imagine, have been one in the seventeenth: not, assuredly, in the nineteenth; for Christianity, at the present moment, although it commands too much regard, and is too well understood, to allow of its giving sanction to religious warfare; yet is far from supporting that once powerful feeling which made the sacred sites the objects of impassioned curiosity. The very reverse was true in the age of Urban II. Too little understood in its spirit and maxims to repress the enterprise, Christianity, or the superstition that bore its name, nevertheless then held an undisputed sway over the imaginations, the hopes and the fears of the mass of mankind throughout Europe. The idea of a conquest so desirable being once presented, nothing could be more natural than that the crusading zeal should flame out, and burn from year to year with a constant intensity. This ardour was in fact not to be quenched until a long series of unexampled miseries and misfortunes had rendered the design of maintaining the Christian power in the east hopeless. If the war had been so conducted as to have ensured early success—and success was at one time by no means improbable, the history of all nations must have taken a different turn; and Asia, perhaps, and Europe, might, after a while, have met in emulous friendship upon the spot which nature has marked out as the metropolitan site of the world.

The fanaticism of the Crusades cannot be deemed more than an out-burst of that imaginative superstition which had then become ripe in every country of Europe. The military sentiment, moreover, had

at the same moment reached a pitch which demanded opportunity to spend itself; and the two vehement principles—the religious and the military, being alike at the command of the sacerdotal order, * nothing else could well happen, than that some enterprise of conquest, directed and incited by the ministers of religion, should engage the energies of men. Perhaps the Church could not have retained her power over the western nations in the quickened condition they were just entering upon, if she had not, at that very crisis, put herself at the head of the ruling passion of the age.

How far the chiefs of the Church discerned her peculiar position when the enterprise was first started, it is impossible certainly to know. But that the Crusades became at length a matter of policy and calculation at Rome is abundantly evident. Still the genuine fanaticism continued to mingle itself, as it readily does, with sinister and mercenary views; and pontiffs and monks, without losing sight of those palpable objects which ordinarily ruled their conduct, surrendered themselves heartily to the current of the general enthusiasm.

* The ecclesiastics who attended the Crusades were not on every occasion able to hold that supremacy at which they aspired. . A notable instance of their failure occurred immediately upon the capture of Jerusalem.—Huict iours apres la prinse de Hierusalem les princes chrestiens tindrent conseil pour eslire un chef d'entr'eux, contre le vouloir des Evesques qui vouloient premièrement faire eslection d'un Patriarche, et par iceluy Patriarche estre esleu et sacré apres un Roy, neantmoins en fin fut esleu de la pluralité le duc Godefroy, lequel ils menerent et presenterent au saint sepulchre, avec Hymnes et Cantiques, donnant louange à Dieu.—*Cronique de Normandie.*

In each succeeding Crusade there appears to have been, on the part of the hierarchy, less of the pure fanaticism of the enterprise, and more of political calculation ; until at length the latter element had so nearly absorbed the former, that the Church could no longer even feign the zeal requisite for exciting and maintaining the ardour of the people. It was just in this languishing state of the crusading sentiment that a new virulence was shed into it by Innocent III., who, finding that the effigy of the SARACEN would no longer serve to set the vindictive passions of Europe in a flame, substituted that of the HERETIC ; and forthwith Albigenses, not Moslems, became the victims of the martial frenzy of the catholic world.

Already we have found occasion to regret that men who stood confessed as the intellectual leaders of the age in which they lived, and who, by right at once of ecclesiastical rank, of personal character, and of mental power, enjoyed an almost unlimited influence, did not stop to ask whether the actual course of human affairs, and the tendency of opinions and practices was indeed good and rational ; or preposterous and fatal. Were any such censorial function exercised by the ruling minds of every age ; or were there a court of public conscience, wherein right and wrong, on a large scale, should be calmly examined, not only might single flagitious acts be prevented ; but the insensible progress of degeneracy might be retarded ; and even a happy return frequently made to the path of reason and virtue. In casting the eye over the busy scene of European affairs in the twelfth century, it is natural to ask, If the great community

of the western nations did not furnish at least one eminent spirit, capable of applying the simple rules of Christian ethics, and the plain maxims of common sense, to the project of the Crusade. Or allowing the infatuation—plausible as it certainly appeared, to take its course unchecked at the first, and to run itself out through a fifty years, was it not natural that the few accomplished spirits of the age should at length have brought the entire folly under review, and have stepped forward to disenchant the nations?

For performing such a work of reason and charity, whom better should we look to than Bernard of Clairvaux? His personal ability to discharge such an office need not be questioned. It was personal ability, unaided by adventitious means—it was mere power of mind, and the momentum of individual character, that had raised him to a position of more extensive influence in the European community than perhaps any five human beings known to history have ever occupied. As simple monk, and then as abbot—emaciate, demure, downcast in look—a mere shadow or apparition of humanity, who, if seen in the choir among his companions, would have attracted no eye, this Bernard had come to such authority that he spoke law in the ears of sovereign pontiffs, made princes tremble, or rejoice, and so ruled the waves of the popular mind as to be able to raise or allay the storms of national tumult at pleasure. True indeed it is that no mind, how energetic soever, could have acquired or sustained any such power in an age of intelligence. It was the superstition of the times, at once profound and vehement, which afforded means and opportunity for the exercise of

an intellectual autocracy of this sort. Yet assuredly he who could actually win and hold it must be regarded as no ordinary being. And although the age was blind, credulous, and infatuated, Bernard reared his influence, in the main, not by cajolery and imposition, but by those arduous and genuine methods which an upright mind will have recourse to. Learned and laborious; self-denying, calm and disinterested, copious and accomplished; and, need it be said, eloquent, he could well support, in personal intercourse with men of any rank, the reputation which he possessed by common fame. If in any thing his celebrity rested on fictitious pretensions, he might without hazard have renounced whatever was unsubstantial. *

Might not then this potent monk, who had so fair

* Not the slightest historical difficulty attaches to the great mass of Church wonders.—Folly, fraud, and preposterous credulity are stamped upon them in the plainest characters. The perplexity arises in those few exceptive instances in which men of sense (although superstitious) and men whose honesty and piety, in the main, we cannot readily call in question, acted a prominent part in the drama of miracles. Not that this perplexity at all implies evidence to which we should listen in favour of the miracle itself;—for this is altogether wanting; but a real enigma presents itself when we endeavour to set an esteemed and respectable name quite free from the charge of collusion with knaves. St. Bernard—if we take the word of his biographers, wrought many more miracles than Paul had done. And it appears from certain expressions in his letters and tracts, that he did not disclaim the reputation of a wonder-worker. His personal credit is therefore implicated in the business. We must at present leave the riddle as we find it; only saying that Bernard's real and indubitable merits were such as might well have borne the deduction of all the prodigies with which his encomiasts have burdened his fame.

an opportunity for gathering up the lessons furnished by the history and calamities of the first Crusade, have discerned, and have asserted truth and morality, as applicable to such an enterprise; and so have saved myriads of lives, and prevented innumerable crimes? Alas, instead of thus standing in the breach, and effecting peace between Europe and Asia, St. Bernard, with the Gospel on his lips, incited again the western nations to make a furious assault upon their brethren of the east; and in so doing became actively the author of incalculable miseries and bloodshed!

The violence of rude minds spends itself soon; and commonly includes the means of its own correction. But when measures essentially unjust and absurd are promoted by men who, having their own passions under command, are able at leisure to work upon the passions of others, when the tones of moderation and the stores of learning are employed for perverse uses, it is then that the mischief spreads and endures. Peter the Hermit was indeed the author of one Crusade; but could never have excited another. St. Bernard, who, with supercilious brevity,* alludes to his predecessor as an extravagant fanatic, not merely kindled the Crusade of 1148; but gave so powerful a sanction to the desire of conquering the Holy Land that, without unfairness, the luckless

* Fuit enim in priore expeditione, antequam Hierosolyma caperetur, vir quidam, Petrus nomine, cujus et vos (nisi fallor) sæpe mentionem audistis. Is populum qui sibi crediderat, solum cum suis incedens tantis periculis dedit, ut aut nulli, aut paucissimi eorum evaserint, qui non corruerint, aut fame, aut gladio.—*Ep.* 363.

expeditions which occupied the next century may, in great part, be charged to his influence.

If those of the epistles of St. Bernard which relate to the Crusade, and if his Exhortation to the Knights Templars, could be read without knowledge of the specific intention, or without recollection of the historical facts whereto they relate, one might easily believe that the project in question was one fully recommended by wisdom and benignity, and sanctioned by Religion. How sedate and measured is the language, how temperate the incitements, how discreet the particular advices, how full-fraught is every page with the serenity, the forethought, the circumspection becoming a chief ! and how copious is the adduction of Scripture ! almost every sentence revolves upon a text ; the sighs of piety rise in fumes from every paragraph ; ejaculatory prayer inspirits many a sonorous period ! we find in these compositions the very substance of fanaticism, stripped of whatever one would call fanatical ; and graced too by whatever appears wise and devout. Lately we turned aside to contemplate an instance of the madness of asceticism, gravely mantled and philosophic, in the person of the Cappadocian primate ; now we have before us a form not less celestial, if less philosophic ; it is that of the accomplished St. Bernard, chief patron and mover of the madness of religious military ambition !

Those who will say that illusions of this elaborate order, tranquilly affecting the very elements of the character, can belong only to ages of mental slavery and superstition, and are not now to be looked for as possible, have something yet to learn of the philo-

sophy of human nature; and, not improbably, are themselves the victims of some similar deep-spread error. St. Bernard, calmly seated in his cell—the Gospels open before him, and with the events of the first Crusade fresh in his recollection, believed that nothing was more praiseworthy or pious than to lash the passions of the western nations to a new fury for exterminating the infidel power in the east. *

That identity of sentiment, and even of language which characterizes the same fanaticism under circumstantial differences, it is curious and instructive to notice. Mohammed doubts not a moment the lawfulness of propagating the true faith by the sword; and the very same plenary conviction runs through the pages of St. Bernard. The prophet of Mecca says—Fight for God, and he will pardon all your sins, and infallibly give you the delights of Paradise. The monk of Clairvaux, on behalf of the Church, and in her name, assures to every Crusard a full remission of all sins, and the blessedness of a martyr, beyond doubt, if he fell in the holy war. † To

* Though carried away by the specific fanaticism of the Crusade, St. Bernard did not forget mercy and justice in all instances. In several of his epistles he decisively condemns the violences of which the Jews were at that time the victims. *Audivimus et gaudemus, ut in vobis ferveat zelus Dei: sed oportet omnino temperamentum scientiæ non deesse. Non sunt persequendi Judæi, non sunt trucidandi, sed nec effugandi quidem.*—*Ep.* 363.

† *Habes nunc fortis miles, habes vir bellicose, ubi dimices absque periculo: ubi et vincere gloria, et mori lucrum. Si prudens mercator es, si conquisitor hujus sæculi; magnas tibi nundinas indico; vide ne pereant. Suscipe crucis signum, et omnium pariter, de quibus corde contrito confessionem feceris, indulgentiam obtinebis. Materia ipsa si emitur, parvi constat:*

be slain, says the saint, is to benefit yourself; to slay, is to benefit Christ! Impartially balanced, whom shall we first excuse, or whom rigorously condemn? The one, by violence and carnage would fain vanquish the world to God: the other, by the like means, thought to achieve a revenge for the Church, and to effect a clearance of a single superstition from a single spot.* Both egregiously

si devoto assumitur humero, valet *sine dubio* regnum Dei.—*Ep.* 363. The English barons, (*Ep.* 423,) are told by St. Bernard that the messenger he had despatched would not only explain the business of the Crusade at large, and narrate what had been effected, but exhibit to them—*largissimam veniam quæ in literis domini Papæ, super eos qui cruces susceperunt, continetur.* The Book, de Laude Novæ Militiæ, ad Milites Templi, exhibits, page after page, elevated and impassioned religious sentiments, thick-set with Scriptural quotations, and the whole purport of this eloquence is to stimulate the murderous passions of mankind! The lawfulness of the enterprise, and its merit, and the certainty of salvation to those who should fall in the attempt, are every where, and in the boldest terms affirmed. *Securi igitur procedite milites, et intrepido animo inimicos crucis Christi propellite, certi quia neque mors, neque vita poterunt vos separare à caritate Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu; illud sane vobiscum in omni periculo replicantes: Sive vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus! Quam gloriosi revertuntur victores de prælio! quam beati moriuntur martyres in prælio! Miles, inquam, Christi, SECURUS INTERIMIT, INTERIT SECURIOR. Sibi præstat cum interit; Christo cum interimit!* This might well be given as a pointed version of more than one passage in the Koran:—so like is fanaticism to fanaticism, all the world over.

* *Commota est et contremuit terra, quia Rex cœli perdidit terram suam, terram ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Inimici crucis ejus. officinas redemptionis nostræ evertere moliantur, et loca Christi sanguine dedicata profanare contendunt. Pre-cipue autem illud Christianæ religionis insigne, sepulcrum, inquam, in quo sepultus est Dominus majestatis, ubi facies ejus sudario ligata est, omni nisu nituntur evellere.—Ep. 423.*

misunderstood the Divine Character ; both frightfully abused the language and the motives of religion : the difference is only in the terms and style ; and in the magnitude and grandeur of the project.

The eloquence of St. Bernard was everywhere triumphant. France and Germany listened in rapture to his sermons : England * yielded to his epistles : Europe again drew the sword, and devoted herself to God, vowing to crush his enemies. † Moreover the faults and precipitancy of the former expedition were prudently avoided in this : the counsels of the Preacher, as well as his declamations, were duly regarded. ‡ Visions and miracles, also,

* The Epistle just quoted, was addressed to the English Barons, and the abbot does not omit the blandishments that might conciliate the parties. Et quia terra vestra fœcunda est virorum fortium, et militari juventute referta ; decet vos inter primos, et cum primis, ad sanctum opus accedere, et armatos ascendere ad serviendum Deo viventi.

† The apologist of St. Bernard may allege that he acted on this occasion in obedience to the sovereign Pontiff, Eugenius III. In writing to whom, on the subject, he says—De cetero mandastis, et obedi. Yet even this same pope was his creature : he goes on to declare the success of his labours.—Et fœcundavit obedientiam præcipientis auctoritas. Siquidem annuciavi et locutus sum, multiplicati sunt super numerum. Vacuantur urbes et castella, et pæne jam non inveniunt quem apprehendant septem mulieres virum unum, adeo ubique viduæ vivis remanent viris.—*Ep.* 247.

‡ Beside other instances of prudence, St. Bernard gave proof of his good sense in declining the honour of leading in person the Crusade. His fanaticism savoured far more of the cell and the pulpit, than of the field.—Quomodo videlicet in Carnotensi conventu (quonam judicio satis miror) me quasi in ducem et principem militiæ elegerunt : certum sit vobis nec consilii mei, nec voluntatis meæ fuisse vel esse. Quis sum ego, &c.—*Ep.* 256.

not a few,* sanctioned the zeal with which the preacher had inspired princes and knights. Even to think ill success possible was an impiety. Heaven audibly blessed the enterprise, and assured a prosperous issue!† Luckless confidence! the intentions of Heaven in this, as in so many other instances, had been utterly misinterpreted. Disaster attended the expedition throughout its course, and a failure in all its objects disgraced its conclusion. But it is unjust, say some of the contemporary religious historians, to affirm that St. Bernard's Crusade, although calamitous to the eye of sense, produced no fruits, such as might be held to redeem the saint's reputation; for how many thousand soldiers of the cross did it send with a prosperous gale to heaven, to claim the promised rewards of martyrdom!‡

This ingenious solution of the perplexing event did not satisfy St. Bernard himself. After declaring, with a piety we should admire, that he would rather

* nimirum, says the Saint's Notary, cum aliquando viginti, seu etiam plures ab incommodis variis sanarentur, nec facile ab hujusmodi dies ulla vacaret.

† Fanatics may safely enough perform miracles—among their followers; but they commit a fatal blunder when they turn prophets. It was here that St. Bernard made shipwreck, and on the very same rock his imitators in every age have split. The infatuations of the present day are meeting a like fate.

‡ Nec tamen ex illa profectione Orientalis Ecclesia liberari, sed cœlestis meruit impleri et lætari. And was not the lot of those who survived and returned to sin, more lamentable than that of those qui in fructibus pœnitentiæ purgatas variis tribulationibus Christo animas reddiderunt?—*Vita S. Bern.* l. iii. c. 4. If the Crusade effected no visible good, yet did it secure the salvation of a multitude of souls, says the Abbot Otho; while another writer assures us, on infallible testimony, that a multitude of the fallen angels were restored on the occasion!

himself sustain in silent patience the reproaches of the profane, than that the glory of God should be assailed; and would think himself happy to serve as “the shield of God,” receiving in his person every shaft of the adversary; he labours to find cases parallel to his own among the histories of the Old Testament: he obliquely refers to the miracles wrought by him in attestation of the Predication of the Cross; and then, as the last and best resource, alleges the inscrutable profundity of the Divine Providence, which, as he scruples not to affirm, often leads men on only to disappoint and thwart them; and commands that to be done which it intends to frustrate! * Alas how much, even by the religious, is the Divine Providence outraged, and the Divine attributes vilified! Every thing is understood sooner than the simplest principles of morality and religion. We passionately plunge into enterprises that are wholly unjustifiable or absurd—enterprises clearly incompatible at once with the dictates of common sense, and the precepts of the Gospel. What may be wanting on the side of reason, we largely supply from the stock of faith; texts and fervours fill out the bubble of our confidence! But in due season the folly bursts! natural causes produce natural effects: the seed we had sown springs up in its

* See Epistle 288, and especially the Apology he addressed to the Pope, *De Consideratione*, l. ii. c. 1. Scorners asked for evidence that the Crusade was from God.—Non est quod ad ista ipse respondeam, *parcendum verecundiæ meæ*. Responde tu pro me et pro te ipso, secundum ea quæ audisti et vidisti; *aut certe secundum quod tibi inspiraverit Deus!* Etsi necesse sit unum fieri è duobus, malo in nos murmur hominum, quàm in Deum esse. Bonum mihi, si dignetur me uti pro clypeo.

proper kind. How reasonable then would it be to retract our presumption, and to confess our fault! but instead of admitting any such pious ingenuousness, we fretfully talk of the inscrutable mysteries of the ways of God! and sum up the matter perhaps, as does St. Bernard, with an abused text—"Blessed is every one that is not offended in Him;" as much as to say—God's ways are such, that it is a vast merit not to resent them!*

Of the second crusade to the Holy Land the Abbot of Clairvaux was immediately the author. Another, far more murderous, and more fatally successful, may justly be attributed, although indirectly, to his influence. About half a century after the death of their Founder, the Bernardins, with the zealous Arnold Amalric at their head, and too well authorized by the language and conduct of their spiritual father, charged themselves with the business of assembling the catholic world for the extermination of the heretics of Languedoc. With how much of horrid glory these labours were crowned, the histories of the times attest. The Romanist of the present day confides in the truth of the miracles recorded to have been performed by St. Bernard;—indeed he cannot question them without discarding at the same time the whole of that evidence upon which his Church rests her pretensions, as the perpetual organ of Christ on earth. Yet it was on the credit of these very miracles (should we not rather with Paul call them lying wonders?) it was on this warranty

* hoc abyssus tanta, ut videar mihi non immerito pronuntiare beatum, qui non fuerit scandalizatus in eo.—
De Consid. l. ii. c. 1.

expressly, that the preachers of the Albigensian Crusade incited that detestable expedition, and justified the massacres and tortures that attended its course! With the maxims of the New Testament before him, is there then nothing in these blood-stained prodigies that should stagger the faith of the Romanist? If the immediate use to which they were applied was—carnage, rape, and unutterable ferocities; if the clew of miracle runs throughout the story of abominable murder, shall a man who owns the powers of reason and conscience swallow, with a blind voraciousness, at once the wonders and the murders? or shall he do so, and claim to be any longer respected among Men and Christians?*

* An inconsistency not easy to adjust, belongs to St. Bernard's statements of the duty of the Church toward Heretics. In some places he seems to disallow measures of violence; while in others he plainly recommends the use of force. These two points, however, are pretty certain: 1st. That whatever he might say or sanction in compliance with the practices of the age, or in submission to authority, his personal dispositions were not of a ferocious kind; but the reverse: and 2d. That with these dispositions, he had become so thoroughly the slave of the Romish despotism, that he held himself ready to promote whatever it approved and enjoined. So it is commonly that men of mild tempers are employed by the arrogant and tyrannous, as their fittest tools, in giving effect to sanguinary acts. In commenting upon Canticles ii. 15—"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes," this Father observes, that the *little foxes* are insidious heresies, or rather the heretics themselves, and adds, *Capiantur, dico, non armis, sed argumentis, quibus refellantur errores eorum: ipsi vero, si fieri potest, reconcilienter Catholicæ*;—this is all very well:—the Church says, *Capite eas nobis*, catch them for us. Yet his doctrine in other places is of a different sort. With a slippery ambiguity of phrases, he gives room for the use

The fanaticism of religious war has seldom if ever been recommended more remarkably than it was in the instance of the canonized hero of France, whose disasters and death may be said to have brought the crusading enterprise to a close; for that which the magnanimous Godfrey began, the saint-like Louis concluded. The extant effigies of this good and valiant prince so well correspond with his recorded actions that we cannot but look upon them as authentic.* What mildness and dignity, what goodness, humility, and yet what fire and strength beam from the countenance! It is a face which, for

of the most extreme means—approves the *zeal* of those who, in tumultuous fury, had fallen upon heretics; though he will not advise the deed;—*factum non suademus*;—but concludes that the sword is to be employed against those who persist in propagating their errors.—*In Cantica, Sermon. 66.* But in an epistle to Hildefond, count of Toulouse, whom he accuses of favouring the heretics of his states, all the truculent rancour of the churchman flows forth; and in addressing the clergy of the province after his return, he seems quite to pant from the labours of extermination; and thus concludes his advices.—*Deprehensi sunt lupi . . . deprehensi, sed non comprehensi. Propterea dilectissimi, persequimini et comprehendite eos: et nolite desistere, donec PENITUS DEPEREANT, et diffugiant de cunctis finibus vestris, quia non est tutum dormire vicinis serpentibus.—Ep. 242 ad TOLOSANOS, post reditum suum.* Such are the strains of ecclesiastics, even the best of them, when irritated by opposition! The reader will not fail to notice the indulgent distinction which the good abbot observes between wolves and foxes. In the sense of Bishop Fouquet, the men, women, and children of a city belonged indiscriminately to the former class—if heresy was harboured at all among them.

* Several portraits of St. Louis, and some of them well executed, are extant (or were so before the revolution) in the Churches dedicated to him, as well as in manuscripts. These are to be seen in Montfaucon's *Antiquities of France*.

suavity, might have belonged to the most refined ages; and a face shining with a religious elevation seldom indeed exhibited in the series of royal portraits. And such in truth was Louis IX. Disinterested to a fault in his conduct toward neighbouring powers; a peace-maker, and an arbitrator inflexibly just: industrious in the discharge of public business, lenient and moderate in exacting dues; accessible and gracious to the poor; firm toward the proud and powerful: irreproachable in private life, temperate and chaste; and withal, a warrior of no mean reputation, justly admired, as well on account of his personal valour, as of his conduct in the field: chivalrous in the best sense of the term; and pious in a sense at which the severity of modern notions must not cavil.*

What then does our hero want, unless it be that vigour of reason of which the superstition of his age had cashiered him? If one might bring St. Louis into parallel with the statesmen and warriors of classical history—with an Epaminondas or Timoleon, a Scipio or a Marius, although he claims over them the advantage of some higher sentiments, and of purer morals; he must yield to them all the prerogatives of that erect position of the soul which belonged to them (although superstitious in their way) as exempt from the humiliation inflicted by sacerdotal despotism. The Grecian and Roman public worship stood subservient to the civil and

* Louis IX. succeeded his father in 1226, and was only in his fourteenth year, and subject to the queen mother, when he acted his part in the abominable conduct of the Church and Court towards Raymond VII.

military powers of the state; while that of the Christian nations—of the middle ages, not merely usurped every kind of influence, but, with an arrogance fitting its infinite pretensions, trod the very souls of men in the dust! Strong emotions of shame and indignation spring up in the mind, shame for the degradations of humanity, and shame for the abused religion of Christ, when one suddenly turns from the sculptures that have brought down to our times the forms of the Grecian chiefs, and inspects the mosaics, the parchments, the painted windows, and the bas-reliefs, in which the magnanimous Louis is shewn, stripped to the waist like a vagabond thief, and patiently receiving from the hands of emasculate monks the discipline of the whip! Or shall we contemplate the monarch of France, not only king, but soldier and statesman, followed by the bevy of his court, and a swarm of ecclesiastics, on the road before Sens, pacing the rugged ground barefoot, on his way to meet—was it some delegate from the upper world, some minister of heaven before whom mortality must tremble, and the pride of kings fall in the dust? No—nothing but a relic; and this relic, *not a relic*; but the palpable work of monkish knavery!*

* St. Louis, receiving the grace of penitence, is one of the subjects represented upon the windows of the vestry of St. Denis. Baldwin II. Latin emperor of Constantinople, in acknowledgment of the French king's bounties to the Christians of Palestine, sent him—the very “crown of thorns,” which had been preserved in the imperial palace; but which the Venetians had lately held as a pledge for a loan. Louis discharged this debt, and received the sacred treasure. Single thorns broken off, were forthwith conferred upon several of the Churches and Abbeys of France.

Far from being a farcical or a politic compliance with the usages of the times, these acts of devotion were, on the part of Louis IX. unquestionably the result of his profound convictions. So likewise were his Crusades ; the infatuation had thoroughly worked itself into his soul ; and every part of his conduct, in the two disastrous expeditions, the one to Egypt and Syria, and the other to the African coast, exhibits the resolution, the consistency, and the greatness which distinguish vigorous minds when ruled by some single and paramount motive. This motive was, in many important respects, unlike that which had impelled the Crusaders of the preceding century. The course of events had insensibly given to the oriental war another, and a new character. With Godfrey, Robert of Normandy, and Tancred, the project was chiefly aggressive ; but after the Christian powers had made a permanent lodgement in Palestine, and had naturalized themselves there, it became at once a duty of humanity, and a demand of public justice to defend the oriental colonies. Accordingly we now hear much more than at first, of the obligation to protect and to rescue the afflicted Christians of the eastern church ; and it is this plea, rather than motives of a fanatical or superstitious kind, which was employed in the time of St. Louis to quicken the zeal of princes and adventurers.*

In this light mainly did the French monarch

* We must revert to St. Bernard to do him the justice of saying, that, even a full century before the time of Louis IX. the plea of relieving and defending the Syrian Christians was employed as an auxiliary motive for undertaking the Crusade. Tempus et opus est existimo ambos educi in *defensionem* orientalis ecclesiæ

regard the expeditions he conducted ; and it would be harsh indeed to affirm that those attempts might not appear to him in the fullest degree justifiable. And moreover, as the final motive had gradually become of a different sort ; so were the immediate excitements very unlike that which impelled the earlier invasions of the Holy Land. Then, the torrent of war poured on directly to the revered centre of devotion. Although the route was unavoidably circuitous, still the line of movement tended always towards the sacred sites. The enthusiasm of the enterprise mounted up therefore at every step of the march ; nor did it abate until the soldiers of the cross had waded through rivers of Moslem blood, in their way to the foot of Zion.

But how much must the crusading zeal have sunk, and how much must it have mingled with secondary motives, when, instead of rushing on to the endeared and outraged spot of human redemption, the crusards had first to assail the enemy in some quarter far remote from those spots ; for instance—along the banks of the Nile, or upon the burning sands of the Numidian coast, and fifteen hundred miles from the Holy City ! and as the impulse was by this means slackened, so probably might room be left for emotions of a better and a calmer sort. This was certainly the case with the French king. The superstitions of his times apart—for which St. Louis was not responsible, his last hours exhibited whatever is becoming to the faith and temper of a dying Christian.

As well royal pride, if any sparks of such a feeling lingered in the bosom of this religious king, as the

ordinary excitements attendant upon a martial enterprise, were fallen, at that moment, to the very lowest ebb. After winning some laurels of little value, the crusaders, at the season of insufferable heat, had encamped upon the desert within sight of Tunis. But they had scarcely begun to rest when pestilence broke out, and threatened to leave the residue of the army at the mercy of an infuriated foe. One of the first to fall was the son of the king—dedicated, from his cradle, to sorrow!* Over his grave Louis himself sickened, and his frame, already wasted by a long course of austerities, at once gave way. Earthly hopes of every kind were waning fast: this second expedition, which should have redeemed the calamities of the first, it was now certain must be frustrated: even whether space would be secured for giving Christian rites to the dying and the dead was doubtful:—whether a wreck of the flower of France would return to tell the tale of disaster seemed uncertain! Horrors thickened on every side; and worse horrors impended. But though the earth itself should remove, and the foundations of things sublunary be broken, the dying monarch admitted no despondency: the surrounding gloom did not darken his soul. His energies as a man, his solitudes as a king, his affection as a father, his zeal as a Christian, were not relaxed. Whatever the exigency of the time demanded to be done or arranged, he completed. His last acts as a sovereign were directed to the long desired object of reconciling the Latin and Greek Churches; and having surrendered his kingdom,

* John Tristan, born in Egypt, at the time of his father's captivity.

with wise and pious advices, to his son, he closed his eyes on worldly pomps, in calm, if not assured hope of entering, in due season, upon the joys of eternity.—

—So is the grace of heaven wont to relieve the darkest histories of the follies and crimes of nations, by unsullied instances of piety and goodness !

The rule of analogy leads on, by natural transitions, from scene to scene, making it necessary to traverse the order of time. Commencing with the most complete instance of aggressive religious warfare, we have passed to those enterprises that were of a mixed kind, and have followed them until they assumed a defensive aspect. We start then anew from this point, to contemplate the memorable example of a nation gathering its strength to a convulsive and frenzied effort for the rescue of its ancient and impassioned religious hopes.

As the terrible catastrophe of the Jewish city and people is fraught with horrors beyond perhaps any other scene of history, so did the sentiment, then called up—the fanaticism of national pride, reach a height to which no parallel can be found. An examination of the moral condition and political circumstances of the Jewish community at the time, is necessary, if we would either read the dismal story with intelligence, or afford to the infatuated sufferers that measure of sympathy which they may so well claim. And with this view it is moreover indispensable that we should dismiss, for a moment at least, those feelings with which, as CHRISTIANS, we are accustomed to contemplate the vengeance that

overtook the betrayers and murderers of the Lord, and the obdurate enemies of his gospel.

Yet is it difficult to disengage the mind from those impressions that give to the events of the Jewish war their supernatural character: in truth this stamp of extraordinary interposition is imprinted upon every transaction of the time:—the rebellion itself—the madness of the endeavour, on the part of so feeble a state, to resist the force of the Roman Empire—the pertinacity of the resistance—the frenzy of the intestine feuds, and the delirium of the last struggle, all bear the marks of a judicial abandonment: while, on the other side, the singular conduct of the Roman authorities, as well as many incidents of the siege and capture of the city, exhibit visibly, must we not admit it, the irresistible control of a hand from above. Looking upon the city, overshadowed by the bursting cloud of fate, the seals of Divine wrath are seen upon its palaces; and one believes to hear the sullen thunder that announces the departure of Jehovah from the ancient place of His rest. Or turning toward the encircling armies, the Roman banners appear to bear an inscription, bespeaking Titus as the minister of the predicted wrath of God.

It need not be feared lest, while affording in this instance a due commiseration to an unhappy people, we should make ourselves sharers in their peculiar guilt. Every reader of Jewish history learns to distinguish between the *ordinary*, and the *theological* aspect of the calamities that have followed the race. Who that has the heart of a man hesitates to take part with the persecuted Israelite, against the iniqui-

sitor? or who would stand aloof, if an occasion offered for defending him from the wanton ferocity of the feudal baron, or the Romish priest? And yet these very sufferings, and all the miseries that have pursued the people in the lands of their dispersion, are as truly a retribution from heaven, as were the famine, the pestilence, and the carnage that attended the overthrow of Jerusalem. If it be lawful to think and speak with indulgence of the Jew of the tenth and fifteenth centuries; is it not so to feel the same, in regard to his ancestor of the age of Vespasian? Do we want a sanction for sentiments of this kind? we receive one that is conclusive from the example of the Messiah himself, who, when, with prophetic eye, he beheld the city as if then torrents of blood were gushing out from its gates, "wept over it;" and without forgetting its crimes, lamented its miseries.

The fanaticism which came to its paroxysm in the Jewish war demands to be traced in its growth, and watched in its several stages of enhancement. To do so is nothing more than an act of justice toward the fallen people; and moreover the subject has—as we shall afterwards see, a special bearing upon a question which arises concerning the influence of the Mosaic and prophetic dispensation in forming the national character.

After ■ schooling of almost a thousand years (from Moses to Daniel) a discipline in which had been mingled every means of grace and judgment, yet attended with only partial or temporary success; the Hebrew people had at length firmly embraced, never again to lose it, that first lesson of theology

which it was the main design of the Mosaic institution to convey. Ever propense to the degrading service of fictitious divinities, while secluded among the glens of Palestine, and where their obedience might have ensured their peace, the nation, when at last transported to the very Pandemonium of idol-worship, sickened, as in a moment, of its inveterate error, and with a sudden and final revulsion of heart, learned to loathe the very names of the gods of the nations. Singular revolution ! the Jew in Babylon, while losing the ancient and sacred language of his religion, the language of the law and the prophets, and while acquiring, in its stead, a dialect which, according to the ordinary course of human affairs, should have infected him more deeply than ever with polytheistic notions, learned the true sense of Moses and the prophets ! Thus, in forgetting the letter of Scripture, he got possession of its spirit !

Become at length the devoted and sincere worshippers of the God of their fathers, and punctilious observers of the ancient ritual ; and now restored to their city and land, it seemed as if the Jewish people were setting out, under auspicious circumstances, to run that course of national obedience and consequent prosperity which should render it a perpetual witness in the eye of all nations, for a pure theology. Now were bright predictions to be fulfilled, and now was the world to admire a people loved of God ; a royal priesthood, an exemplar of wisdom, virtue, and felicity !

So it might have been thought ; but the hour was come for an occult law of retribution—a latent principle of the spiritual economy, to take effect upon

the chosen race. Those who, age after age, had condemned the Divine promise of temporal prosperity as the reward of religious obedience, and who had so long and so perversely “sinned against their own mercies,” were now to be dealt with on a different rule—a rule which drew its reason from higher purposes than heretofore had been regarded. The Jewish people, at this time, were indeed willing to maintain the honour of Jehovah ; and they were allowed to do so ; yet it must be under the condition, for the most part, of tribulation and oppression. The economy of *earthly* benefits which had remained in force under Solomon, Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, was superannuated, and was displaced by an economy of motives of a more elevated order. Antiochus is suffered to try the faith and constancy of those true worshippers whose faithless fathers had been given into the hand of Assyrian and Babylonian oppressors.

This change in the character of events cannot be contemplated without perceiving that the dawn of a day of immortal hope was just then breaking upon the mountains of Judea : a precursive trial was therefore to be made of that higher order of things, and of that more perfect discipline, wherein the welfare of the soul was to take precedence of that of the body ; the spiritual to be preferred to the natural ; and eternity to be more accounted of than time.

A marked and correspondent change took place at this era of Jewish history in the sentiments of the people, and especially of their chiefs. Instead of talking exclusively, as heretofore, of political deliverance, and of national aggrandizement, they mixed, with such secular hopes, views of a more refined and

prospective sort. They had gradually learned to look through the dim shadows of death for the rewards of piety; they turned their eye from the hills of Palestine, and with a steady courage endured torments and met death, that they might obtain "a better resurrection." * Not a less remarkable revolution of feeling was this than that of their final abandonment of polytheism. It was in truth a progression of the national mind—a progression that involved the remote destinies of the human family; for in the history and fate of the race of Abraham, the history and fate of all nations are bound up.

The acquisition of the belief of a future life, and of its infinite rewards and punishments, as a popular dogma, deepened and expanded to an immense extent the range of the religious emotions. The Jew of the Asmonean era had become capable of sustaining a part of spiritual heroism such as his ancestors of the time of David had never thought of. The "mighty threes" † of that pristine age were indeed valiant as warriors, and faithful too as champions of the God of Israel; but Judas Maccabeus, his companions and his successors, drew the motives of their constancy from considerations far more recon-dite and potent; and they fought and bled not merely as soldiers, but as martyrs. ‡

* 2 Mac. vii.

† 2 Sam. xxiii.

‡ The spirit of the Jews of this period, and their religious opinions, are to be learned much better from the two books of Maccabees, than from the polite pages of Josephus, who takes vast pains so to dress up the homely piety of his ancestors in hellenic phrases, as should render it inoffensive to his Gentile friends and readers. The simple language of faith and pious hope—hope of a better life, the learned author of the Antiqui-

It was natural, as this expansion of the religious notions of the Jews took place under circumstances of extreme national trouble, and reached its maturity while they were struggling for their political and religious existence, that it should bring with it those tumultuary feelings which are provoked, as well in vulgar as in noble minds, by witnessing wanton violations of sacred things, persons, places, and usages. During the three centuries preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and while, with transient intermissions, this nation of true worshippers was contending against the Macedonian, Syrian, and Egyptian kings, or fretting under the pressure of the Roman power, there was going on a slow accumulation of those emotions upon the national mind—intense, profound, and ungovernable, which, after many a portentous heave, at last burst forth and spread a universal ruin.

But this progression of religious feeling passed beyond its sound state ; the ripening reached corruption. The people, while they firmly retained whatever was acrimonious in their national ideas, and whatever might engender spiritual arrogance, cast off those purer and nobler sentiments that had once imparted to their character the dignity and moderation of true virtue. Thus, although their external ties translates into the dialect of Grecian philosophy and Grecian heroism. This is especially to be observed in the speeches of the Jewish worthies. With no other materials than what he obtained from the books of the Maccabees, he expands and embellishes the simple, affecting, and vigorous expressions of devout patriotism which he there found, and is fain to present his readers with rhetorical harangues, after the fashion of Thucydides.

allegiance to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, remained irritably steadfast, and although they haughtily challenged every point of honour that belonged to them as the only depositaries in the world of an unsullied religion, they renounced those expansive sentiments, so frequently introduced by the prophets, which have a benign aspect toward all the families of mankind.*

Nor was this all, though indeed it might have been enough; for the zealot nation, scrupulous practitioners of whatever in the Mosaic institutions tended to insulate them from the community of mankind, had loaded those institutions with offensive exaggerations; and moreover had superseded, to a great extent, the precepts of the Pentateuch by a comment and tradition abominably perverse. So it was that the whole repulsive rigidity of sectarianism wrapped them about as a garment; while they held few or none of the compensations of a purer morality.

* Josephus, who never forgets his solicitude to conciliate Gentile readers, takes pains to conceal that contempt which his countrymen indulged toward the polytheistic world. He even denies in a formal manner that the Jews allowed themselves to condemn or ridicule other modes of worship. "For my own part, I do not bring into question other men's religious practices. In truth, it belongs to us as a people to preserve our own usages;—not to inculcate those of other nations. And our legislator expressly forbade our either ridiculing or defaming those whom the nations around us regard as divinities."—*Against Apion*, b. 2. This was a bold assertion, and one which his adversary might have easily refuted. Are not the gods of the heathen contemptuously handled by David and the prophets? and are not the worshippers of stocks and stones declared to be stupid and absurd? This scorn of idols and idolaters had increased, not diminished, among the Jews.

At once, and in an extreme degree, sanctimonious and debauched, the Jews, of the Christian era, were in that very state which, more than any other, is liable to pass into violence. Who so furious and rabid as the scrupulous, immoral religionist, heated by a sense of injury and insult?

One element more, and only one remained to fit the Jewish people for the terrible part they were to act in bringing on the catastrophe of the state. This was the spirit of faction, and this they had admitted to the full. The rise of the rancour of religious strife—a subject too extensive to be entered upon in this place, might well claim deliberate attention, inasmuch as these virulent and peculiar feelings which seemed for the first time to break out upon human nature about a century before the birth of Christ, have ever since, even to the present day, kept their place, and have had a great share in determining the course of events throughout Christendom. At present it may suffice to advert to the fact that, at the time we are speaking of, the bosom of almost every Jew, beside the common malevolence or murky pride which then characterized the race, harboured a still more definite and vivid animosity against some rival party: each mind, while revolving around the one gloomy centre of national feeling, revolved also about the centre of its sect. Unhappy people, thus to exist and move in an element of hatred, at once diffusive and condensed !*

* When he refers to the factions that distracted the Jewish people, Josephus employs the strongest terms which language affords—"One might justly say sedition grew upon sedition; or the state might be compared to a rabid beast that, in want of

Such were the pungent sentiments which prepared the Jewish people for the horrors of its catastrophe. Then there was added to these feelings a specific and extraordinary excitement, which gave intensity to every passion of a political or religious sort. This was the fond, and now desperate expectation of the appearance of their Messiah.

The two principles, namely, the belief of a future life, with its rewards and punishments, and the hope of national deliverance and universal empire under the conduct of the promised Son of David, had kept pace the one with the other ; and both had gradually become more and more distinct, had mingled more in the popular sentiments, and had settled into familiar forms of expression, so that what, in the remoter times was a mystery, or an esoteric doctrine, conserved by seers, and hidden under symbols, had now reached the populace, and was in every mouth. The hope of redemption under the Messiah, which existed in a warm and natural state at the time of the advent of Him who was indeed "the Lord's Christ," underwent a pernicious revulsion from the disappointment that ensued when the Son of Mary was rejected. It was then that pious desire gave way to a frenzied wistfulness—the prey of every delusion. The articulate language of prophecy—the awakened expectations of mankind, and the portents of the times, all concurred to fix, beyond mistake, the then passing years as the destined era of deliverance. Scripture, and the comments upon it, marked almost the very

sustenance from without, rends and devours its own entrails." *Τί τηλικούτον*, exclaims the historian, *ὃ τλημονεστάτη πόλις, πέπονθας ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων, οἳ σου τὰ ἐμφύλια μύση περικαθαροῦντες εἰσήλθον.*

moment ; while the events of the age, and the balancings of human affairs, declared the times to be fulfilled. Yet these years rolled away, and no Saviour—no Saviour from Gentile tyranny, appeared ! In the interim, the sacrilegious foreign power advanced every day nearer and nearer to the sanctuary of God. Unutterable profanations had been threatened, and even perpetrated ! but a little more, and the Israelitish polity must receive a fatal wound at the heart ! Yet the heavens were not rent ;* Jehovah and his Anointed stood afar from the help of his inheritance ! Must it not be to try the constancy of Israel to the extremest point, and to enhance the arrogance of the oppressor to the highest degree ; so that, on the one side, the coming deliverance should be the more welcome, and on the other, the vengeance so much the more signal ? Doubtless, at the last, God would visit his chosen people ! Suddenly, and in the blaze of his power, would he descend to his temple, unfurl on the heights of Zion the banner of his love and of his wrath ; and thence advancing, followed by the tribes of Jacob, would go forth, “King of kings,” to trample on the necks of all mankind.*

Fond, and yet not, as it seemed, irrational hope !

* Josephus, from obvious motives of policy, draws a veil over the subject of the hope his countrymen entertained of a Prince and Deliverer who should rule the world. To have given its just prominence to this theme would have been highly dangerous both to himself and to his people. His allusion to it is brief and cautious, and is accompanied by a comment designed to exclude all suspicion. “But what chiefly incited the Jews to the war was an *ambiguous prediction*—*χρησμός ἀμφίβολος*, found in their sacred writings, the purport of which was, that, *about that time*, some one of their country should rule

Proof could be advanced in support of every part of this vast conception. No expectation at all, comparable to this, none so great, so bright, and at the same time so *distinct*, had ever been indulged by any people : no analogous instance stands upon the records of history : an ambition so dazzling was known only to the Jew. And this hope had been rendered the more vigorous by compression ; the weight of all visible probabilities weighed it down ; nothing less than the Power of Rome, with all her legions, bore upon the expectation of Israel, and yet did not crush it. Judæa against the world :—rather, God and his Messiah, against the potsherds of the earth !

Often must it have happened to the haughty Jew to gaze, in sinister contempt, upon the military pomp of the empire, at Rome or in the provinces, and to meditate the hour when all this splendour should fade before the throne and car of the Messiah. Many a time had he brooded upon the thought, that Rome and her pride should ere long lie in the dust at the gate of Jerusalem ; and suppliants from the capitol kiss the feet of the princes of Zion.

How then shall we measure the desperation or the rage of this people, when a hope so ancient, so vast, the world. This prediction they appropriated to their own race ; and many of their Rabbis were led astray by the interpretation. In truth the oracle pointed to Vespasian, who was declared Emperor in Judæa.”—*De Bello Jud.* L. VI. c. 12. If this were indeed the “chief incentive” of the war, it doubtless held a much larger place in the sentiments of the people and in the harangues of their leaders than appears from the narrative of the historian.—Josephus knew more of this “ambiguous prophecy,” and of its mighty influence over the national feelings, than he thought it prudent to avow.

and so authentic, was drawing to its crisis? At length a terrible surmise stole upon the dismayed heart of the people;—that the very foundations of their belief were illusory! The dark consummation which this wretched people—hemmed in by an irresistible enemy, had to fear, was not the famine and thirst of a siege; or massacres within their walls, and the carnage to be expected from the irritated legions: it was not the overthrow of their city, the ruin of their temple, the devastation of their land, the extinction of the race;—a far worse catastrophe was before them:—nothing less than a plunge into the bottomless gulph of atheism:—it was the death of a nation's soul that was at hand! If indeed at the last the promise should fail, if the Gentile sword should be suffered to cut off root and branch of the people of Abraham, what then were the Scriptures? what Moses and the prophets? what Sinai and its thunders? what the long series of signs and miracles which had conveyed to this people, and to this alone, a genuine faith in the One God? By a false concatenation of inferences, the religious convictions of the Jewish people, the whole of their belief of things unseen, was made to hang upon the event of the siege of the holy city. Let but the abominable signals of the Roman legions be planted upon the walls of the temple, and then Israel, carrying with him all his hopes, the anticipated splendours of time, and the glories of eternity, must leap from the height into the shoreless abyss of despair!

Under the pressure of emotions so supernatural and extreme, if more could have been endured by man than was then suffered, or more effected than

was performed, it had actually been sustained and done. The feeling of the people was far more profound than that it should measure itself against any pains or dangers which mortality can undergo. The visible and sensible woe of the siege did but faintly symbolize the convulsive anguish of every Jewish heart. It was as when a guilt-stricken wretch, approaching his last hour, though torn by the pangs of death, forgets the wrench of bodily pain in the torment of the soul : the writhing of the limbs, the contortions of the features, the livid hue, the glare of the eye, the sighs, the groans, are imperfect expressions of the misery and terror of the spirit !

To attribute an absolute authenticity to the elaborate speeches which the Jewish historian puts into the mouth of the chiefs of the faction would be idle ; and especially so where, according to his own account, all, or most of those who were actually present on the occasion soon afterwards perished. Nevertheless there is a sense in which these harangues deserve attention ; for Josephus, familiarly acquainted as he was with the sentiments of his countrymen, and with their style of thinking, no doubt adhered in some degree to dramatic truth in composing them, and would assign to the speakers language proper to the character of the persons. Thus it is that while the speeches of Roman generals and senators, as given by Livy, are Livy's speeches, they may still be regarded, although fictitious in a strict or historical sense, as authentic and characteristic examples of Roman feeling.

With this caution in view, it is matter of some

curiosity to examine the harangues of those of the Jewish leaders who survived the destruction of the city, and whose fate it was to receive in their persons the last strokes of Roman vengeance. Supposing it then to float somewhere between truth and fiction, true in its elements, fictitious in its form, the address of Eleazar, chief of the Assassins, to his companions, when shut up in Masada,* and unable longer to hold out against the Romans, may be adduced as a highly characteristic exhibition of the ultimate, or melancholic stage of martial fanaticism. With the extinction of the specific hope whence it had sprung, the heat and vivacity of the feeling had passed away, leaving only its desperation : the fury is gone, but not the folly. The once boisterous passion assumes even something of the serenity of good sense ; but yet wants the consistency of true wisdom. So terrible a commotion of the soul of ■ people could not instantly subside ; and a while after the roaring of the storm is hushed, the billows continue to fling their huge masses sullenly upon the shore.

The secular hope of national deliverance and military glory was that which had inspired the constancy of the people up to the moment when they beheld their temple in flames ; but then, of necessity, this ill-placed confidence dissolved. It was that very temple which should have received the Messiah ! that building, as they firmly believed, no power in

* A precipitous and strongly fortified height, overlooking the *southern* extremity of the Dead Sea. The Maccabees first, and afterwards Herod, had constructed on this hill-top what was deemed an impregnable fortress. As such it had been always held by the latter in a state of readiness to serve him as a place of refuge in the event of a rebellion.

earth or heaven could overthrow ; for it was destined to endure to the consummation of all things ! But the temple was now levelled to the ground : the people's hope disappeared also, and with it, as we cannot doubt, the religious faith of multitudes of those who perished in the carnage that followed. In that last hour of anguish did not many a warm Pharisaic heart become suddenly cold with Sadducean despair ? Yet others there were whose feelings underwent a revulsion, and in whom, when the worldly seduction had lost its power, the better religious sentiment would regain its influence. And so—if we may regard as in any sense genuine the last and fatal discourse of Eleazar, was it with that desperate leader. *

Many of the auditors of Eleazar, says the historian, quavered. Some indeed met the ardour of their chief with a kindred resolution, and would at once have given it effect. Others, held by the tenderness of nature, and gazing upon their wives and children, doomed thus to die, burst into tears, and refused assent to the fatal resolution. The leader beheld with anxiety their trepidation, fearing lest it might shake even the more courageous, and disappoint his design. As if inspired with high thoughts, his eyes fixed, and in energetic tones, he again addressed the crowd, bringing before them the brightness of immortality. †

All started up as if seized with frenzy, or possessed with demons, to give instant effect to the advice of their chief. Each man embraced his wife—his

* See note at the end of the Section.

† See note at the end of the Section.

child, and in the midst of fond kisses—his arm unknowing what it did, gave the fatal plunge. Each thought a moment of the miseries from which that stroke redeemed his loved companion and progeny ; and all, without exception, dared the horrid act ! Pitiable fate of men to whom it seemed the least of evils thus to make a carnage of their women and babes ! The husbands and fathers, feeling as if every moment they now survived was an injury done to the dead, hurried on what was yet to be effected. Fire was put to whatever the fortress contained. Ten of the survivors, chosen by lot, fell upon their companions : every man in dying embraced the bloody remains of his own. At last, one, chosen from the ten, slays the nine, and he, taking a last look around to ascertain that the work of death was complete, rushes on his sword !

There is yet a form of popular fury which ought here to find a place, although its peculiarity may seem to disconnect it with any other kind. We mean — Atheistic Fanaticism, when it affects a community, and impels it to assault every mode of worship, with intent to exterminate religious profession. Of this dire infatuation modern times have given us an example—the first in the history of mankind ; and may it be the last !

Atheism, when it spreads among ■ people in the form of a positive opinion, vauntingly professed, and eagerly disseminated, is something very different from ordinary irreligion, or reckless and profligate impiety ; and it will be found to display the well-known characteristics of a virulent religious creed :

it is in truth nothing else than a *heresy*; and the proselyting Atheist, how much soever his pride may resent the imputation, is a mere zealot ;—a zealot surpassing every other in blind malignancy. Is the bigot religionist dogmatical, acrimonious, impudent ? is he a demagogue, and a noisy predicator of monstrous paradoxes ? Just such is the Atheist. And if the one readily seizes the occasion to act the persecutor, and to dip his hands in blood, so, as we have found, does the other.

An opinion that attaches only to scattered individuals, displays a sample scarcely of its genuine properties ; but let it affect masses of the people, or take possession of a community, and then its real qualities come into play. Every age has produced a few petulant sophists, who would fain persuade the world and themselves, that they had at length rid their natures of the very rudiment of belief, and that they held nothing to exist which could not be handled and seen, tasted or smelt. But an affectation so extreme does not readily overthrow the common sense of mankind ; nor would it ever do so without the aid of peculiar and accidental incitements of a political kind. In fact, every imaginable form of monstrous error had been turned up in the chances of four thousand years, before this of national Atheism—more monstrous than any, made its appearance. That the great body of an instructed people should yield itself a prey to the madness of Atheism, and should deliberately endeavour to rear the social structure upon the site whence every vestige of worship and religious fear had been removed, was indeed a novelty that would not have been reckoned

among things possible, or in any degree likely to take place.

Yet the French revolutionary frenzy actually reached this pitch; and it is well remembered what was the temper of this last prodigy of the human mind, when it burst the shell. Its parents had announced that it would be rational, just, and moderate—the beautiful creature of Philosophy! but it instantly proved itself to be rabid and blood-thirsty, like an offspring of the Furies. As the atheism of philosophers would not have spread over the land, unaided by political impulses, so neither would the political passions that attended the course of the revolution, have sustained alone, and for so long a time, that sanguinary exasperation which raged through France, year after year: and in fact the massacres and the executions of the republican era were, in almost every instance, hurried on by an embittered hatred of whatever appertained to religion;—legends of blasphemy were inscribed on all the banners of blood:—the civil war was a crusade against God; and those who, at the commencement, had professed it to be their ambition to blot out the name of Christ, were borne along by the impulse to which they had yielded, nor could stop, until they had spent all their spite in the endeavour to dethrone the Most High!

We need only to change the phrases current among the populace, and substitute one set of emblematic embellishments for another, and then the horrid scenes of the French revolutionary civil war are repetitions, on a larger scale, of those exterminating frenzies that have so often desolated the fair

provinces of that country. A super-human spectator of terrene affairs, ignorant of the dialect, and of the circumstantials, would have failed to distinguish the bloodshed and devastations of the one era, from those of the other ; and far from suspecting that the truculent savages of the Revolution were the disciples of philosophers, might have deemed them only superstitious friars ; or templars, of a new and more intolerant order.

The authors of this confusion discerned, just in time, the jeopardy into which they had led the country : they therefore hastily retraced their steps ; and mankind lost the benefit of the spectacle which must soon have been witnessed, if the intolerance of impiety had been left to run its round. Leave was therefore given to the Maker and Ruler of the universe to resume his place in the fears, although not in the affections of the people ; for it had been found that, without the stay of religion, the social machine could not safely perform its movements. The public heralds proclaimed anew “ the Eternal ;” and permission was granted—to the credulous at least, to expect a future life, and to fear retribution.

The lesson may perhaps long serve the European nations, and no second attempt be made of a like kind. Yet what has once happened must no longer be spoken of as utterly beyond probability. This assuredly ought to be confessed, on the ground now of actual experiment, that if, in any instance, the ordinary and sensual impiety of the mass of mankind comes to be quickened by a stirring spirit of disbelief—if the irreligion which hitherto has been sluggish or frivolous, kindles into a petulant bigotry,

and utters itself in acrid blasphemies ; and especially, if the same atheistic zeal lurks in the bosoms of the upper classes, and ferments at the centre of government, then little will be wanted to put these forces in movement, or to direct them against the institutions and the parties that uphold the worship of God. A slight and accidental political excitement would be enough to bring on the crisis. Whenever, if ever, such a train of events shall in any country have room, it will be seen that, if Popery be a bad instigator of the malignant passions of a people, Atheism is a worse ; and that the fanaticism of impiety should be dreaded even more than that of superstition.

The history of modern Europe, and of our own country especially, would have afforded many and striking examples of that order of Fanaticism which brings the military and religious sentiments into combination. The instances are present to the recollection of every reader. And beside that a complete enumeration would fill volumes, some of these cases are of that ambiguous kind, which a writer may well desire to evade, rather than meet the dilemma of either giving a sanction to what it would be unsafe to approve ; or of sternly condemning what we ought not to think ourselves competent to adjudge as altogether immoral. Moreover, other cases of this order involve the political and religious prejudices of existing parties ; and are not to be spoken of without kindling the embers of faction. To call the originator of this or that body—a fanatic, would be, according to the interpretation of some, to

become the champion of the opposite system of opinions ! or, to brand with the same epithet the leaders on both sides, would be to wound, still more deeply, the fond predilections of all. There are pages of our British history—English, Scottish, and Irish, which will need to be written anew, when our religious factions shall have come to their end.

NOTES

Referred to at page 244.

SPEECH OF ELEAZAR, AT MASADA.

“SUCH, brave comrades, such is our immemorial resolution, that to God alone, the true and righteous Lord of men, homage is to be rendered ; and that neither from the Romans, nor from any other earthly power, is servitude to be endured. The day is now come in which we are called upon to seal our profession by our deeds ; unless we be ourselves unworthy of that profession. And this is certain, that if the servitude we have in past times submitted to was grievous, what awaits us, should we fall alive into the hands of the Roman, will be aggravated by intolerable torments. Were not we (the Sicarii) the first to revolt ? are we not also the last to resist ? I hold it then to be a special grace of Heaven, to us accorded, that we possess as we do at this time, the means of dying honourably and free, while others of our nation, betrayed by their fallacious hopes, enjoyed no such option.

“No one can now doubt that to-morrow’s sun must see this fortress in the hands of the enemy. But there remains to us the undisputed choice of a noble death ; and a death in the arms of those most dear to us. No, ardently as he desires to take us alive, he is as unable to deprive us of this choice, as we are to resist him in the field. Resist the Roman in the field ! no, this we should long ago, and from the first of our revolt have understood, when peradventure it might have availed us to

know it, that the Divine irrevocable decree has sealed our destruction as a people. The Jewish race, once so dear to God, He has consigned to perdition. Do we want proof of the fact? let us look to the site of the sacred city, at this moment smoking in its ruins, and strewed with the bodies of thousands of the people!

“And now, my companions, indulge not any such presumption as if we, who hitherto have escaped the common ruin, were not sharers in the common guilt; and might yet evade the universal sentence that is to annihilate the race. Look about you, and see how God himself has been stripping us of the vain hope we had clung to. What avails us the possession of this inaccessible fortress? what the abundance of provisions, and our ample stock of weapons? God’s out-stretched arm has rent from us our fond conceit of safety. Think you that the flames yesterday, which at first bore upon the enemy, did of their own accord suddenly turn round upon our newly-raised defences? No, this reverting fire was blown by Almighty wrath—the punishment of our presumption; and we find that the vengeance of God, provoked by our sins, is more inexorable than even the malice of the Romans.

“Already doomed, as we are, by God, let us die:—die—our wives exempt from abuse—our children unknowing bondage; and then, these delivered by our hands, we shall have only to discharge, one for another, a generous office, and mutually ensure the death and sepulture of freemen! Our treasures we will consume. How will the Roman vex to be defrauded at once of our persons and of our wealth; both of which he thinks his prey! Yes, but we will leave him our stock of food, an evidence that we were not urged by famine, but that from the impulse of a steady purpose, we had preferred death to slavery.”*

“Was I deceived then in believing that the brave had rather die than live dishonoured? Comrades, do you fear to die even

* The historian’s method of expanding immensely his materials, is shewn by a comparison of the succinct speeches reported in the Book of Maccabees, with the elaborate orations that embellish his work. In the present instance a license of abridgment and compression is freely used, the result of which may perhaps be a nearer approach to historic truth. So long a discourse as that which Josephus attributes to Eleazar (occupying five folio pages) would certainly not have been either uttered or listened to, under such circumstances.

to escape evils worse than death? In an extremity like this ye should neither hesitate, nor want a prompter. But let me remind you of that which from childhood we have learned, which our fathers and the sacred writings teach, and which our ancestors have so often authenticated by their deeds, that it is life, rather than death, which should be thought of as calamitous.* Death, is it not the Liberator of souls? does it not dismiss them to the pure abodes where none of the ill chances of mortality can enter? So long as we are bound to this mortal frame, and liable to the evils it inherits, our life is but a death. Oh unworthy alliance of the divine essence with a fabric that must die! Organ of the soul's power and will, yet does the body weigh it down to earth, from which freed, it soars to its native region, regains a blessed and unbounded liberty, and like God himself, evades the sight of mortals. Yes, unseen does it enter the body; and unseen depart—a pure and unmingled essence; yet potent, the cause of life, and itself immortal. Witness the independence and activity of the soul in sleep, when discharged for a while from the warfare of flesh, it enjoys its proper delights, and, taking the privilege of its affinity to God, freely pervades all places, and even penetrates futurity!

“With what reason then can we fear to die, who court the refreshment of sleep? Preposterous surely for those to grudge themselves perpetual freedom, who prefer liberty to any other of the goods of life! This readiness to put off mortality we, as Jews, ought especially to exhibit; or if indeed we must go to learn such a lesson from strangers, let us look to those Indian sages who loathingly live a while to fulfil the purposes of nature, and hasten to die that they may shake off the ills of animal existence. None hinder them in their purpose; none lament their exit; but rather account them happy, and commit to their hand epistles of love to their kindred in the skies. Gladly do they ascend the pyre where all the grossness of the

* If this speech be regarded as nothing more than the composition of Josephus, it will not the less serve to prove a fact, important in its bearings—That a distinct belief of immortality—a belief far more distinct than appears on the face of the canonical prophetic writings, had long been entertained among the Jews, and had constituted a main article of that body of tradition, which, rather than the Scriptures, governed the opinions, the sentiments, and the practices of the nation.

body is to disappear. Shall we then, better taught as we are than they, be less prompt to urge our course to immortality? This were indeed a shame.

“But even if we had been taught to think the present life the chief good, and death the greatest of evils, it would still be certain, that, placed as we are, we ought manfully to meet our fate; since, as well the will of God, as the necessity of the moment, commands us to die. Believe it, countrymen, that long ago heaven sealed the fatal decree which none of the Jewish race can evade, and which consigns us, guilty as we have been, to utter extinction. Our nation has fallen, not by the power of Rome; not even by our errors in conducting the war; no, a stronger hand has crushed us—we perish beneath the stroke of the Almighty!

“Time would fail me if I were to recount the many signal instances in which, contrary to all probability, and even against or beyond the intention of our enemies, we have fallen, the victims of Divine vengeance: or, when any of our race has escaped immediate carnage, who would not deplore their lot as far more grievous; who would not rather die than endure what such have suffered? Some, torn of the lash; some, tormented with fire; some, half eaten of beasts, and rescued, to be thrown to them alive for a second repast! Or, were they permitted to live? yes, but only to be made the sport of their adversaries! How do those now desire to die, who are yet compelled to breathe!

“—Alas! where now is that city of ours, the mother-city of Judea, where, with her many circling ramparts, her lofty towers and castles; where, filled as she was with the means of war, and crowded with myriads of valiant men, eager to defend her! What has become of the city which we fondly believed to be the abode of God? Rased to the ground! nothing now marks the spot where once stood Jerusalem; nothing but the tents of her destroyer! Ah, and you may find there, as relics of the Jewish people, some miserable ancients, seated in the dust; or a few women, reserved to dishonour.

“Which of us then, even if he could do so unhurt, should endure to behold another sun? Who is there so false to his country, who so imbecile, who so chary of life, that does not vex to have survived so long as this? Would we had all died

rather than have seen the Holy City rased by the axe of the enemy, and the Temple, with horrible impiety, upheaved from its foundations! Our souls, indeed, have lately been fed by the generous hope of speedily avenging upon the foe the fall of our city. But that hope now vanishes, and leaves us no option: let us rush then upon an unsullied death. Let us have pity upon ourselves, upon our wives, upon our children, while yet we have the power to do so. Death indeed all must undergo; but not injuries, bonds, insults; or not unless our cowardice drives us to meet these greater evils. And what evils are they? Elate with confidence, we at first defied the Roman power: once and again we have scorned the proffered terms of our exasperated enemy: dare we think then of his rage if he take us living? Wretched shall the younger of us be whose strength lasts out longer torment! wretched the elders, who have no power to sustain the trial! One shall see his wife led away to suffer violence; another, with his arms bound, shall hear the cries of a son, vainly imploring a father's aid. No, this shall not be! now—now are our hands free; now are our swords our own: let them then do for us the kindly office! Free from the thrall of our enemies, we die; free with our wives and children we launch from life. Our law enjoins the deed; our wives and our children implore this grace at our hands: God himself throws the necessity upon us. The Roman would fain prevent it, and is all alarm lest any of us should perish before he can scale our defences. We hasten then to offer to him, instead of his desired revenge—amazement at the boldness of our death.”

SECTION VIII.

FANATICISM OF THE SYMBOL.

THE arduous part of our subject now meets us. In reviewing those phases of error which have long ago passed away, we occupy a vantage ground, and may at leisure measure the proportions of the distant object. But every circumstance of the inquiry is of another sort when extant forms of religion come to be examined, and when, what we should calmly and impartially speak of, are practices, opinions, and modes of feeling, regarded as excellent, or leniently dealt with as venial, by our contemporaries—our friends—our coadjutors—ourselves !

It were arrogance in any man to assume that he can exercise an absolutely impartial judgment, concerning the things of his own age. No human mind reaches so serene an elevation. If the prevailing errors of the day have been discerned by here and there an individual, himself has not escaped that depressing influence which attends a long-continued and anxious meditation of objects that show a frowning face to whoever refuses them his homage. Conscious then of a disadvantage not to be avoided, and careful to maintain that modesty which the knowledge of it should engender, we may yet advance,

enheartened by the anticipation of an era—perhaps not very remote, when the Religion of the Scriptures, having at length passed through the cycle of its degradations, shall, without any more hindrance, bless the human family !

In contemplating the errors of past ages, no point more important presents itself, and nothing which should so fix our attention, as the fact that certain extravagant modes of feeling, or certain pernicious practices—the offspring of an active and virulent fanaticism, have, after a while, subsided into a fixed and tranquil form, such as has allowed them to win the approval, and to secure the support, of the most enlightened minds ; and so to be transmitted, through successive ages, accredited, unquestioned, and admired. The turbulent stage of fanaticism would do the church little harm, if it were not succeeded by a moderate fanaticism, seemingly wise. The parent, in these instances, is an ephemeron ; but the progeny has a longer term than that of the phoenix. The rugged surface of our globe, such as it is seen among the Alps or Andes, imposes awe, as if those stupendous piles of primeval rock, capped with the snows of thousands of winters, were the very symbols of unchanging duration, or of eternity itself ; and yet is it not true that the huge masses owe their stern grandeur to terrible powers of commotion ? these mountains were upheaved when our world was in her fit of boisterous frenzy—when convulsions shook her centre. Instead then of regarding the now motionless forms as emblems of repose, we should deem them rather the relics, and the portents too, of confusion.

Nothing, or nothing favourable, should be inferred on the behalf of any system of things from its present tranquillity, or from the moderation and the wisdom that appear to invest it ; or from the incidental benefits which it may claim to have produced. The blackest superstitions have shown an exterior, mildly magnificent : the extravagances of personal torture have worn the garb of seraphic piety : the Fanaticism of intolerance has shone in combination with great qualities ; and the zeal of military proselytism has made alliance with substantial virtues. There is nothing, then, to wonder at, if even the brightest personal excellences are found to exist under a state of things which owes its origin to an impulse essentially fanatical. The question is always, not whether accomplishments, and virtues and piety exist within this or that system ; but simply—whether the system itself be good or evil.

The Fanaticism of the Symbol, or a malign and turbulent zeal for the honour of a creed, supposes of course, the possession of a written and authoritative canon of faith. But then this Rule has to be interpreted ; and the interpretation, in each instance, insensibly draws to itself those profound emotions which the sacredness of the canon calls into play.

It does not appear that sectarian rancour, in any distinct form, had shewn itself, before the time when the Jewish prophetic economy having been sealed, and the written testimony of God consigned, in a defunct dialect, to INTERPRETERS, a field was opened to diversities of opinion, each of which challenged to itself, entire, the prerogatives that

attach only to the original document. From the period when exposition of Scripture became the business of a class of men, the Jewish community parted into sects which, in an exasperated condition, were the main causes of the ruin of the state, the destruction of the city, and the dispersion of the race.

In this instance, what we assume to have been *new* in the history of human nature, was not the existence, or the breaking forth of diversities of opinion ; for these have disturbed all countries in all ages ; nor was it the alliance of certain modes of thinking on abstract subjects with political interests ; for nothing has been more common than such associations. But the novelty was precisely this—That the tremendous weight of God's sanction, truly believed to belong to the Canon of Faith, was claimed by each party in behalf of its special exposition of the rule. So fatal an assumption effected a firm coalescence of every religious sentiment with the passionate workings of self-love, pride, jealousy, and the sense of personal and corporate welfare.

Within the circle of these feelings every element proper to Fanaticism finds room ; nor has any species of it been altogether so compact, or so permanent. The other kinds, as we have seen, have had their hour, and have vanished ; but this has settled down upon Religion—upon documentary religion, as well in Europe as in Asia, and now in America, and has become the inseparable condition of all forms of Worship.

We say, every element proper to Fanaticism displays itself in the Fanaticism of the Symbol.

As for example :—The Divine Being, when so outraged as to be made the patron of a virulent faction, appears to the votary under a malignant aspect, and can no more be thought of such as He is. Again, the irritation excited by opposition in matters of opinion, when heightened by a vindictive forethought of future judgment, brings with it the most peculiar species of misanthropy known to the human bosom : and an arrogance too, transcending other kinds of aristocratic pride. With an anathematizing Deity, an anathematized world, and himself safe in the heart of *the only Church*, the zealot wants nothing that can render him malignant and insolent.*

Mere diversities of opinion by no means necessarily involve virulent sentiments. Sad indeed would it be if Christian amity, and that true unison of hearts and hands which the church should exhibit, could not be hoped for until an absolute uniformity of notions and practices has been brought about ; for it is plain that so long as one mind possesses more original power, and more accomplishments than another, there must be inequalities of knowledge, and varieties of apprehension. Nothing less than the imparting of omniscience to every human being could remedy the inconveniences that arise from this source. Nor in fact are such differences ever found to throw a cloud over private friendships, or to disturb the harmony of society, while angry exaggerations, and the swellings of wounded pride, are avoided.

* This was written before the outbreak of "Church Principles."

There can therefore be no need that, as a resource against the evils of sectarian virulence, we should either throw ourselves into the arms of Church despotism, and renounce the liberty of reason ; or give way to the relaxation and the apathy which would render us indifferent to truth and error. This indeed were miserably to degrade human nature, and to quash its noblest ambition. We subtract the premium from mental industry—we remove the crown from the goal on the course of knowledge, when we discourage the zeal with which vigorous minds pursue Truth. How should mankind ever emerge from barbarism, or how free themselves from the tyranny of superstition, if the first lesson we are to teach them is, that error has no noxious quality, and truth no prerogative ?

To affirm that a true knowledge of Religion avails little to our welfare, is not only an absurdity, but must be regarded as a pernicious tampering with that fatal insensibility which, alas ! envelopes human nature. Instead of teaching the indifferency of opinion, rather let every man's anxiety to obtain *for himself* the inestimable pearl of genuine knowledge be stimulated to the utmost ; and then, not only will this jewel be individually secured, but the illusion will be broken up whence fanatical zeal takes its rise. Strange illusion indeed, which impels a man who has bestowed little or no industry upon the business of seeking truth for himself, to use efforts so prodigious for forcing it upon others ! An anomaly surely is this in the law of self-love ! But the temper and the conduct of the zealot are made up of inconsistencies. It is, he says, the well-being of

his fellow men which incites his endeavours ; and yet nothing in his style or mien bespeaks philanthropy : a disposition the very reverse of good-will must be assigned to him. Besides, while thus anxious to hear a creed—let it be a faultless creed, uttered by all lips, this champion of the faith walks about scarcely heeding the many grievous degradations under which humanity is suffering. His eye can glare upon wretchedness, and even upon vice, in their most melancholy forms, and forget what it sees ! Nay, into the cup of human woe he can himself pour the bitterest ingredients ; for he is ready to afflict his fellow men with the whip and with the brand ; and he can cast them into dungeons, and leave them there to die in pestilent damps ! all this he can do, and still persuade himself that it is “zeal for God,” and love to man, which prompts his labours !

Thus absurd may the human mind become when it surrenders itself to religious delusions ! The power of the infatuation, in these cases, seems to result from a combination of the opposite feelings belonging to a full persuasion, and a secret misgiving. The controvertist owes the heat of his zeal, as well to a firm conviction, as to a mistrustful anxiety, concerning the truth of his dogmas ; and the faith and the doubt are alternately attached to the authoritative document of his belief, and to his special interpretation of it. It is this very oscillation of the mind which produces the turbulence of his emotions. If the imagination be liable to high excitement from a pressing sense of the reality and the impending nearness of the objects that engage it, this excite-

ment may be furnished, either by a vivid faith in the original CANON; or by confidence in the CREED thence derived. Then, as fear and jealousy bring the irascible passions into play, these will not fail to take occasion from the obscurity of the subject in dispute, from the cogency of an opponent's argument, from a conscious incompetency to deal with matters so difficult, and not least, from those qualms which follow a too highly stimulated exertion of the faculties.

In matters of belief, and especially when the powerful motives of religion take possession of the mind, we involuntarily lean, one upon another. This social instinct is stronger than is perhaps ordinarily supposed; and it is very likely to be lost sight of in cases where the prevalence of angry passions appears to deny its existence. And yet, in those very instances, it is most intensely at work. Man proves himself to be constituted for society, not less by his hatreds, than by his affections. Amid the dimness and the intricacy of the present scene, wherein Truth evades pursuit, and Error uses a thousand artifices to get herself courted, the perplexed spirit fondly looks for ■ numerous companionship in the path it takes. Belief, and the comfort of belief, mount with the tens, and hundreds, and thousands, that are seen to be joining us on the road. We cannot believe alone; and our doubts too, are in the power of others. To assail our convictions, is not merely to wound our self-love, and to irritate our pride, but it is to withdraw something from the interior warmth and vigour of the soul. Without formally confessing it as a fact, that an antagonist has robbed us of our

assurance ; for the contrary would be affirmed, our feelings are the same as if we had been despoiled of that precious possession ; and these feelings prompt us, not merely to resent the injury, but to recover the lost property.

Putting out of view certain accessory motives, which must presently be mentioned, the zealous propagator of a Creed has an interest to promote that deeply engages his passions. Pride, and secular advantages out of the question, it is a matter of sincere anxiety with him to secure, to maintain, and to extend, the pale of his party. He looks aghast at the danger of being deserted, or of seeing a host on the opposite heights. No endeavours are too great therefore which may arrest defection, while it is small and feeble. Under the pressure of this solicitude it is no wonder that the defender of a Creed should avail himself of extreme means of persuasion. Or if measures of violence are not at hand, he snatches up the weapons of spiritual hostility. And first, a strenuous endeavour is made, so to identify the special interpretation with the Authoritative Canon of faith, as that whoever impugns the former shall stand declared, as “ the enemy of God !” Instead of admitting for a moment the reasonable supposition that the Interpretation may perhaps contain more than the Canon will support, and that therefore caution should be used in doling out anathemas, every artifice of an elaborate sophistry is employed to keep such a supposition out of view. Nothing less than the peculiar exigency of the occasion could drive the zealot into so egregious a dogmatism ; for he feels that, if he were to give

ground but an inch, he must forfeit his usurped right to fling the bolts of heaven at his opponents. If *his* Interpretation be not indeed divine, it is merely human—it is a simple opinion! and if so, it must be submitted to the ordinary conditions of argumentation. The headlong champion would not go so far as he does, if he knew how to stop short; or if there were any middle ground on which he could stand. It may well be believed that, in many an instance, the acrimony, and the blasphemous arrogance of sectarists, have scandalized, even themselves, in their more sober moments. But what could be done? As well surrender the controversy altogether, and confess defeat, as relinquish the right to curse “the enemy” in the name of God! This right relinquished, and how meagre, how cold, how powerless a thing is the bare argument, reduced to its naked merits! The punishment attached by the laws of the moral world, to the first offence—that of entertaining a malignant exaggeration, is—the necessity it involves of running on to still worse excesses. Once madly insult reason and charity, and we are abandoned, perhaps for ever, by both.

The transition is rapid, and almost involuntary, from the first stage of fanatical intemperance to its last: the ground in these regions is precipitous, and whoever leaps, leaps into an abyss. The facility with which a specific gratification may be procured, is a main circumstance in giving impetuosity to all sordid desires; for while it is difficulty that enhances the nobler passions, it is facility that enflames the baser. So, especially, does it happen with rancorous and vindictive emotions. Only allow them ■

ready means of reaching their consummation, and they rush on, ungovernably. Now the peculiarity of the position which the religionist occupies, offers always to his hand the most tremendous missiles revenge can covet! On the field of common life, many obstacles happily stand in the way to prevent the completion of an angry resolve:—the dark purpose of the moment postponed, dies away, and is forgotten. But it is not so in the spiritual world. The revenge which the irritated zealot meditates is ready, it is safe, and it is ample: how then should it be foregone? He has only to mutter perdition—and the stab is given. A murky revenge, analogous to this of the religionist, has been common among barbarous and superstitious hordes. The malign sorcerer, the intimate of demons, thinking himself full fraught with venom borrowed from the infernal world, is well content to dart a look only at his enemy; sure that the mere glance of the evil eye of hatred would in due time take effect, that the florid cheek must fade, and the strength decay, and the victim fall.

Yet Conscience claims her hour with all men, even the most debauched; and it must especially be so with those whose habits have made them conversant with the divine rule of morality. Such, although indulging the darkest malignity, are every day reading that “whosoever hateth his brother is not of God.” They may abstain from distinctly bringing the criterion home upon themselves; and yet are fain to have recourse to pleas, intended to parry the condemnatory inference from the rule. The pretexts of zeal are many; and if, as we have seen, tormen-

tors, murderers, devastators of kingdoms, can quote chapter and verse in justification of their barbarities, how easily may those who only curse, but do not kill their opponents, do the same.

Many, as is evident from the peculiar character of their devotional sentiments, have taken a somewhat more circuitous, but a still more effectual method for lulling conscience, and for turning aside from themselves the rules of charity. This method—alas the inconsistencies of human nature! has been, so to cherish the fervours of piety, and so to straiten the pattern of the external behaviour, as should seem to remove all suspicion of the genuineness and elevation of personal religion. By amassing to a prodigious height the visible evidences of sanctity, a commensurate license has been obtained for the indulgence of hideous passions. A man who every day ascends the mount of ecstasy, and holds intimate converse with heaven—should he be called in question, when he comes down to earth, on account of an inexorable or vindictive temper? Examples of this very sort are abundant on the pages of Romish pietism; and we may find on the calendar, men whose breath was pestilence, and whose every word was a fiery bolt, yet persuading themselves and their admirers that they enjoyed celestial favours, such as Gabriel and Michael might envy! To assume that the accident of a protestant creed quite excludes any parallel enormity, were indeed to be blind. What we are now speaking of is—human nature, and the mysteries of its delusions; not the question of transubstantiation, or of the pope's pretensions.

Among those who make themselves conspicuous

as the chiefs and leaders of the fanaticism of dogmas and creeds, many marked distinctions, arising from natural temper, might be pointed out; but it must suffice here to mention the two orders of character that stand foremost. These are—The Despotic, and the Ambitious.

There have been Bajazets and Zingis Khans on the field where the quill is the only weapon that is wielded. But how difficult is it to analyse satisfactorily the emotions that constitute the lust of power, where nothing that is secular or tangible, nothing that is intelligibly advantageous, nothing that makes a man richer or better, is to spring from the attainment of his purpose! While the earlier and immature stages of a dominant passion retain many alliances with other motives, and are found to be mixed up with various ingredients, so as to afford several points of connexion, whence they may easily be traced to their sources, and brought to view; it is the characteristic of the *last stage* of such passions that, having let go every such alliance, they become inexplicable, and defy scrutiny: a simple element admits of no analysis. The passion that has at length made itself the exclusive master of the breast, closes the avenues, and enjoys its solitude. Thus it is with avarice. So long as any one purpose for which money avails is kept in view, we may conceive of the miser's avidity; but after every ordinary desire has been excluded and renounced, the love of hoarding can be described only as an insanity, to which it is vain to apply the principles of reason. When the wretch, shutting out the pleasures of life, its pride, and its hopes, clasps his shapeless bags as a sovereign good—we

lose hold of him—the last link of human sympathy is snapt, and he seems to go adrift from his species.

A similar mystery belongs to the lust of power in those cases where it prevails exclusively of the hope of any palpable benefit to accrue to the individual. The passion which leads a man to subjugate kingdoms is intelligible; but how shall we explain the feeling that makes a man pant to bring the realms of mind under bondage, and when it is not himself that is to enjoy the homage of the vanquished world? Yet it is a curious fact, that the individuals who have exhibited, in the extremest degree, this species of insatiable arrogance, have themselves occupied a subaltern position in the hierarchy or polity to which they rendered their services; and have not shewn any very active personal ambition, as if the attainment of visible supremacy had been their ultimate motive.

Minds in an eminent degree fervent and energetic never occupy the common ground of vulgar interests:—their native region is a higher one, or a lower; and although they may seem to be busy, and perhaps are so, with the ordinary concerns that fall under their management, these palpable elements are but so many ciphers of a more important intellectual process that is going on: the matters handled are dice, by means of which a great game is played. Such spirits, conversing with the ideal rather than with the actual world, see every thing in symbol. The revolutions and advancements, the perils or the increase of a hierarchy, mean, to such, more than can be given account of in common modes of computation. While the poet descries on the face of

nature the types of a world of unsullied beauty, and while the metaphysician gathers from the things around him nothing but abstract truth, there is a class of men whose conceptions of ideal perfection turn upon order—government, and the unison of wills. Add to this peculiar intellectual taste, a haughty asperity of temper, and bring the individual to his position within some vast edifice of despotism; and he will exhibit the singular passion we are speaking of. Or we may adduce an actual instance, and name the learned, irascible, dogmatic Jerom, as our sample. All his great merits duly admitted*—and in truth Jerom stands unrivalled in his age, as well for accomplishments, as force of intellect, it can yet be no injustice thus to point him out as a proper specimen of that theological despotic temper, which, irrespectively of personal aggrandizement, impels a man to refuse to others the liberty of thought and utterance; and which would, if it were possible, impose eternal silence upon the world of mind; so that all should bow, not indeed to himself, but to the standard of belief which he admires and defends.

With the fairest opportunities, again and again presented to him, of ascending to whatever position he might please of ecclesiastical greatness, and of

* The power of miracles was not reckoned among this saint's endowments, and it is singular that not a man of superior understanding made any boast of the sort. Erasmus balances the disparagement ingeniously:—*Quod si cui nihil absque miraculorum portentis placere potest, is legat Hieronymianos libros, in quibus tot penè miracula sunt, quod sententiæ.* Noattention is due to a spurious Life of Jerom, in which miraculous powers are largely claimed for him.

grasping the fattest things of the Church, this extraordinary man broke away from the world, and from the pontifical court, and freely, and without affectation, took up his abode in a narrow cell at Bethlehem.* If at length a little sphere of personal influence gathered about him, it was by no efforts of his own that he thus came to be courted as chief of a community.† Jerom was, in the most complete sense, an intellectualist; and it cost him little to tread the pomps of the world under foot. Few perhaps have relished with a keener taste the delights of a literary course. Upon the books and parchments that crammed his cloister he gazed, pen in hand, with fond and greedy satisfaction: the king of Babylon looking down from his gardens upon the gilded roofs of

* Jerom's accomplished biographer (above quoted) will not allow the stupid monks of his own age to suppose that this illustrious man—monk as he is called—led a life in any sense like their own—*cæremoniis obstrictam*. And he subjoins an animated description of the ancient monastic institute—its liberty, its elevation, its purity. Such, we grant, it might be when a Basil or Jerom presided; but assuredly not so when the feeble and the fanatical were left to themselves. Let Palladius bear witness.

† Though ordained Presbyter, and nominally charged, as Sulpitius testifies (*Dialog.* 1.) with the care of the Church at Bethlehem; he held office under the stipulation that he should not be burdened with the pastoral duties. His only external care seems to have been that of the consciences of the ladies who put their spiritual interests under his direction. Of the mode in which he acquitted himself of this duty the Epistles to Marcella, Eustochium, Paula, &c. give evidence. It should be added that not the slightest suspicion attaches to Jerom in these instances. Those who would indulge raileries on the occasion prove that they judge of the characters of men by the rule of their own knowledge of human nature.

palaces, all his own, might have thought himself less happy.*

Yet Jerom not only wanted the serenity of the Christian temper, which may render a man happy in seclusion, though conscious of powers that might enable him to shine in the first ranks of life; but he was deficient even in that philosophic placidity which belongs to the genuine lover of physical or abstruse science. He was the theologian—and the word is designation enough. So long as there might be heard, from any quarter of the wide world, a dissentient whisper, or a breath of opposition to the authentic decisions of the Church, no rest could be enjoyed, and no mercy could be shewn:—the gainsayer must be crushed! “Never have I spared the heretic,” is the boast of this doctor, “but have always reckoned and treated the enemies of the Church as my own.”†

None could dispute Jerom’s merit in this instance.‡ Was there any where displayed a disposi-

* A great part of his patrimony Jerom expended in the collection of a library, which his writings prove to have included the principal literature of the age. These, purchased at Rome and in Egypt, he carried with him when the second time he abandoned public life, and retired to Bethlehem.

† Proœm. adversus Pelagianos.

‡ Erasmus in one place seems to deny Jerom’s acerbity of temper, and appeals to certain mild expostulatory epistles addressed to his friends. But the proof of a man’s disposition is to be gathered from his behaviour toward his enemies. Yet the same writer on another occasion says, speaking of his controversial and apologetical pieces—*In utroque vehemens et acer Hieronymus, ut nonnullis parum memor Christianæ modestiæ videri possit.* But, says he, it is not to be wondered at that a man of so pure and holy a life should show some impatience toward gainsayers!

tion to call in question, even in the most modest style, the immaculate creed, or the faultless usages of the Church? Jerom started up from his pallet, and with the iron rod of his merciless eloquence pursued the offender from side to side of the empire—from Egypt to Britain; from Syria to Spain—from Numidia to Gaul.* It is edifying to follow this defender of “a perfect Church” on those peculiar occasions in which the whole forces of his mind are employed—not to sustain some one of the capital principles of faith, nor some article of discipline apparently good and sanatory; but a confessed and egregious abuse; an abuse against which moderate and reasonable men had already raised their voices; an abuse to which public opinion was then actually administering a partial remedy; an abuse moreover, which presently afterwards the very chiefs of the Church themselves found they could no longer uphold, and were compelled to denounce. It appears that scandalous irregularities had long attended the nocturnal services, or vigils, with which certain festivals were honoured. Yes; but the usage was ‘a venerable’ one; it had been authenticated: the Church—the Church approved it: popes pronounced it good; but more than all, a bold and contumacious dissident had come forward to impugn it. The night vigils therefore, with all their debaucheries, were to be valiantly

* He protests however that it was Error, not Men, that he hated. Aut certè, si in errore voluerint permanere, non nostram culpam esse, qui scripsimus, sed eorum, &c. His opponents attributed the warmth of his zeal to envy—Ego solus sum, qui cunctorum gloria mordear: et tam miser, ut his quoque invidiam, qui non merentur invidiam!

maintained, and maintained too by the most inexorable ascetic of the age ! Amazing solecism ! this doctor, who would himself cheerfully have burned rather than sanction the marriage of a priest, is now heard pouring execrations upon an opponent whose extent of crime was to assert, on the one hand, the lawfulness of clerical matrimony, and to deny, on the other, the expediency of promiscuous nocturnal assemblages in Churches !*

Athanasius, with a magnanimity that has extorted praise even from Gibbon, suffering, preaching, and writing in defence of a doctrine that constituted the very foundation of the Christian system, is well entitled to indulgence, if at any time the heat or the anxieties of a momentous controversy lead him into intemperance of language. But we can scarcely grant indulgence to the despotic Jerom, whose arrogance bursts all bounds on an occasion in which a wise man would either have silently listened to rebuke, or have candidly and openly admitted the propriety and seasonableness of his opponent's objection.

* The candle-light processions and nocturnal services which formed part of the ceremonial of the Church, were, like very many of its pomps and superstitions, adaptations only of idolatrous practices which it was found more easy to transmute than to abrogate. The Paschal vigils were the Thesmophoria, under a change of names. Who shall say whether decency has been most violated by the worshippers of Ceres, or the observers of candlemass ? The derivation of the nocturnal illuminations from Egypt to the Grecian worship, and the adoption of the custom of the Church, is traced at length by Ciampinus, *Vetera Monimenta*, Pars I. p. 190. Eusebius tells us that splendid illuminations were employed by Constantine as a means of bringing over the populace of Byzantium to Christianity

An important lesson might be gathered from a review of the circumstances of each of the controversies in which this learned writer engaged ; but we must at least pause a moment upon the one carried on against, first, Jovinian, and then Vigilantius.*

If any such exchange were practicable, we might well consent to throw into the gulf of oblivion one of the most voluminous of the Fathers—even Jerom himself, as the price of recovering an authentic statement of the opinions and arguments of these two early dissidents, of whom, in fact, we can now learn nothing more trustworthy than what a good catholic of Spain or Ireland may know of the doctrines of Luther and Calvin by the favour of his priest. That they were men of unblemished faith and piety, as well as of vigorous understanding, cannot be absolutely ascertained ; nor are even their specific opinions to be clearly determined. Contumelious exaggeration swells every sentence of the passages in which their opponents depict them.† It may however be inferred pretty clearly that the one, as well as the other, inveighed against each of the principal superstitions of the times ; especially against the vow of virginity, and the merits of monkery, the mediation of saints, the worship of relics, and the usage of promiscuous vigils. It seems also that the absolving power assumed by the clergy, and the secular usurpations of the hierarchy, were called in

* Jerom does not abstain from the pun which the name of his opponent so naturally suggests.—“*Vigilantius ?* no, call him rather *Dormitiantius*.”

† *Ais Vigilantius os foetidum rursus aperire, et putorem spurcissimum contra sanctorum martyrum proferre reliquias.*

question by them. No valid suspicion attaches to the orthodoxy of these men ;* but it is plain that the assault they made, though directed against single points only, or adjuncts of the faith and practice of the Church, involved the fate of the entire edifice of Religion—or of religion, such as doctors and monks had made it ! Every thing must have fallen—the polity, the creeds, the power of Rome, the monasteries : not a stone left upon another, if Jovinian and Vigilantius had succeeded in awakening the people of Christendom from their trance ; and had also brought emperors and secular men of rank to listen to them favourably. Had these early reformers been able to lead back the minds of men to the Scriptures, and to the simplicity of faith and a true morality, the horrors of a thousand years of superstition might have been saved !

Alas ! another destiny awaited the nations. The Church, at the close of the fourth century, had reached the edge of a steep ; yet it stood upon ground whence a return might seem practicable. Learning and intelligence were widely diffused ; and of the aliment of knowledge there was no dearth ; for a seal had not yet been set upon the volume of Scripture. The separate existence and independence of the eastern and western—the Greek and the Latin Churches, secured, or might have secured, an asylum to liberty. Indications too may be dis-

* Jerom, in his Catalogue of Church Writers, assigns Vigilantius a place among heretics, solely on the ground of his opposition to the points above mentioned : had his orthodoxy been assailable, there is no doubt we should have heard of his delinquency.

cerned of the fact, that, although high personages, and dignitaries, and eloquent writers, held together, and understood their common interest, there were individuals, and perhaps multitudes, who were far from assenting to the superstitions of their times, and who, with the Scriptures in their hands, dared to doubt, though hardly to speak or act.*

The regeneration of the Church, in that age, might appear hypothetically possible; and it was actually attempted. But the men whose intelligence should have taught them to listen to reproof, and who should have entertained, if it had been but for a moment, the suspicion that the course of things which they promoted might be unsafe—these, with ■ headlong intemperance, rushed upon the objectors, and triumphed! Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerom, the three illustrious leaders of the age, joined their giant strength, and gave to the Church the plunge which sent it down to the abyss. Whatever of degrading superstition, whatever of sanguinary fanaticism, whatever folly, whatever corruption, whatever

* The frequency and the seriousness of Augustine's references to the heresy of Jovinian prove that it had spread to an alarming extent; and the same may be gathered from the bitter anxiety of Jerom. The former, *De Bono Conjugali*, and *Retract.* b. ii. c. 22, says—Joviniani hæresis sacrarum virginum meritum æquando pudicitie conjugali tantum valuit in urbe Roma, ut nonnullas etiam sanctimoniales, de quarum pudicitia suspicio nulla præcesserat, dejecisse in nuptias diceretur.—Although repressed by the Church, the monstrous doctrine continued, it is added, to be whispered and insinuated during several years. Jovinian himself was exiled to the island of Boa—a rock on the Illyrian coast, where he died:—such was the tolerance of the fourth century!

cruelty, belonged to the religious condition of Europe under the sway of Hildebrand, may fairly be attributed to the part taken, and to the course pursued, by the great men we have named : the fate of mankind through a long night of ignorance and malign tyranny was sealed when Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerom, combined to crush dissent.

If it were attempted to apportion the blame among the three, a distinction—often requisite, must be made between personal criminality, and the actual ill consequences of a mistaken course of conduct ; for while it is Jerom who must bear, almost alone, the blame of indulging a despotic and malignant temper, it was the opposite qualities of Augustine—his mildness and his piety, that gave to his influence a more extensive and permanent efficacy. Mankind would have sickened at the arrogance of the one, if the other had not stood by his side. The bishop of Milan perhaps should take station between the two.*

* Jerom had much more to do with these dissidents than either Ambrose or Augustine. The bishop of Milan, in an epistle to pope Symmachus, reporting the result of a council of seven or eight bishops, held there for the condemnation of certain heretics, assures his holiness of their perfect concurrence with the papal court:—Jovinianum, &c. &c. quos Sanctitas Tua damnavit, scias apud nos quoque, secundum judicium tuum, esse damnatos. All were no better than Manichees, whose impious doctrine—clementissimus execratus est imperator (Theodosius)—and whose sectators had been expelled from Milan.

The allusions made by Augustine to Jovinian are in a somewhat better style ; and it appears from them that his opinion was formed upon hearsay. See *De Pec. Merit. et remis.* b. iii. c. 7, and *De Nupt.* b. ii. c. 5 ; where we learn that Jovinian had first dared to call Ambrose—Manichee—the common epithet

Fanaticism, as we assume, combines always the malign and the imaginative sentiments ; and in some instances the former, in others the latter, predominate. Thus, in the case of the despotic champion of existing establishments, the darker ingredient prevails over the brighter ; or quite excludes it. But with the ambitious propagator of novel dogmas, or the factious chief of a sect, the imaginative element is ordinarily paramount ; and it is not until after the temper has been impaired by exposure to irritation that the irascible and vindictive passions take the lead in the character. The religious demagogue is at first simply an Enthusiast, and rises to Fanaticism upon the winds of strife. Moreover, the natural progression of his sentiments involves another unfavourable turn ; for the public course he pursues, and the emergencies which, as head of a party, he encounters, present many occasions wherein neither his enthusiasm nor his Fanaticism—neither poetry nor tragedy, will bear him clear of the perplexing embarrassments that surround him. He has recourse therefore to guile ; and from that fatal moment every sentiment assumes a new relative position, or itself undergoes transformation. It is as when a drop of some potent essence is suffused in a chemical compound ;—what just before was colourless, or of a

then of theological contempt, and flung from side to side like *Methodist* or *Calvinist*. Taking Augustine's own account of the matter, as stated a little further on, in the same treatise, it must be granted that Jovinian had some reason on his side when he charged the Church with favouring Manichæism by her idolatry of virginity. To the same purpose see *Contra duas epist. Pelag.* b. i. c. 1. *Contra Julian.* b. i. c. 2.

brilliant hue, has become, in a moment, turgid ; the splendour of the rainbow is gone ; an earthy feculence clouds the liquor ; heat too is evolved, and noxious fumes rise from the surface.

The despot remains nearly the same from the commencement to the close of his career ; for pride and hatred are steady qualities ; and arrogance is stagnant. But the demagogue, or ambitious leader, passes through three stages of feeling, at least ; and when he reaches the goal, is often hardly to be recognised as the being who started. The despot too, is very nearly the same personage under every diversity of ecclesiastical system. But the sectarist, or schismatic, receives a specific character from the circumstances that surround him, and from the qualities of the body from which he breaks off. This accidental influence may be, either for the worse or the better ; and in truth, when the general body has become in an extreme degree corrupt, and when the objection insisted upon by the separatist is in the main reasonable, we are not justified, on the ground, merely, of some extravagance or vehemence of conduct, in designating the Objector as a Fanatic. A man who takes up a righteous cause may speak or act fanatically, and yet may deserve our respect and gratitude. He alone should be called fanatic, whose course of conduct was at first prompted by impetuous passions ; and who throughout it, shrinks from the ordeal of reason.

Protestantism has been reproached on account of its fruitfulness in factions ; and the same reproach unquestionably attaches, in an equal degree, to the ancient Church, and especially in the era of its

highest secular prosperity. Meantime the Church of Rome boasts of her unity ; and let her do so ! Not now to insist upon the terrible means she has employed to quash her opponents, we should bear in mind that main principle of her polity, which leaves a wide field always open to spiritual enterprise and ambition. Protestant Churches have failed to calculate upon certain tendencies of human nature ; and so have made no provision for giving a useful direction to exuberant zeal. The very minds which, during the first four centuries, or among ourselves, would have headed a faction, and given their name to a hostile and separate communion, have, under the fostering care of the Papacy, lent their extravagance to the Church itself, and have proved themselves its most efficient supporters.

Either as the Founder of a new order, or as the Regenerator of an old one, energetic and ungovernable spirits have seen before them, at all times, an open field. It is true that a curbing hand was held, by the popes, upon this species of ambition ; and yet the restraint was not more than enough to enhance, by difficulty, the passion for spiritual enterprise.—The young and frenzied devotee, after astounding the monasteries of his native province, by unheard-of severities, and by portentous whims—by fastings, whippings, visions, ecstasies ; and after imposing upon his superiors an unfeigned terror by turbulences of behaviour, always thoroughly catholic indeed, and therefore so much the more difficult to be dealt with, obtained their leave—with flaming credentials in his hand, to beg his way, bare-foot, from Spain, France, or Germany, to Rome. At the foot

of the Sovereign Pontiff he threw himself in the dust—prostrate, body and soul: there he wept and raved his season:—already he had vowed himself the “dauntless Chevalier of the Virgin,” and he only waited permission to fight her battles, and those of the Church, under sanction of its Head. During the weeks or months of suspense, his austerities and his pretensions roused a hundred jealousies among the comers and goers of the papal court: feuds and seditions made a perpetual din under the windows of the Vatican; and it seemed as if all the demons had flocked together to thwart, if possible, the holy purpose of the new adventurer, from whose hand they expected many a terrible buffet! At length the Holy See, having proved the constancy of the candidate; or we should rather say, having ascertained that his frenzy was of the sort which, though it might be managed, could not be repressed, and glad to rid itself of his importunity, granted the desired sanction, and signed the Brief.*

* The career of Ignatius Loyola combines, in the most complete manner, all the elements of ambitious sectarian fanaticism; and a well written life of this illustrious founder might subserve other purposes than that of exhibiting the folly, knavery, and superstition, that have ever been encouraged by the papacy. We much need—protestants as we are, to have placed before us, and for our instruction, those vivid instances of delusion and extravagance which the annals of the Romish Church so abundantly furnish. There are still those who, if they would look into the glass of history, might catch there their own resemblances, and draw an inference of incalculable importance! Some such would find that their public course has been, in its essential motives, and in very many of its circumstances, the counterpart of that of men signalized as the spiritual fathers of innumerable cruelties, impostures, and corruptions. Let Gon-

The Founder or the Reformer, now big with licence that would reach all extents of absurdity, paced his way back—patrician mendicant! to his native mountains. Monasteries spring up about him in each cleft of the rocks: his rule attracts every moon-stricken brain of the province; and in a year or two he moves about, the admired patron of insanity, far and near! Such, in substance, has been the history of scores of adventurers who, had it been their ill luck to be born on protestant ground, could have done nothing more illustrious than give an ignoble name to an ignoble sect, have troubled their own age by angry divisions, and have conferred, upon three centuries after them, the burden of some hard-to-be-uttered epithet.

Deprived of its monkish apparatus—considered only as a means of drawing off restless ambition, the Romish hierarchy could not have stood its ground so long. If it had had, age after age, to contend with the dauntless spirits that originated or restored the several orders—even with St. Dominic, and St. Francis;—with St. Bernard, with Loyola, and with De Rance; in that case it must long ago have been rent into rival factions.

So far as considerations of this sort should be admitted to have influence in spiritual affairs, the question would deserve to be entertained—Whether a permanent provision should not be made within the arms of a protestant church for giving a range to those extraordinary energies which in all times

zales and Ribadeneira be read and digested by any who, while panting for the notoriety of miracle, are forgetting truth, honour, reason, faith, virtue.

make their appearance, and which, if not pre-occupied, do not fail grievously to trouble, and to endanger the community that neglects them?

Fanaticism—we have said, has first an active or turbulent, and then a settled and moderated form; for that which begins with inflammatory symptoms, subsides into a chronic derangement. In its earlier state it attaches chiefly to minds of inferior quality; but in its latter it insidiously invades the most generous, the most vigorous, and the most accomplished; and from these it draws recommendations which ensure to it credit and perpetuity. So was it with the frenzy of asceticism, which, after raging among the vulgar—the Anthonys and the Symeons of Egypt and Syria, became a tranquil epidemic in the high places of the Church, and overpowered the sense and piety of men like Basil, Gregory, Chrysostom, and Jerom. And so the fanatic cruelty of intolerance, entertained at first only by the basest natures, crept at length upon the noble; until ■ Ximenes is seen to take up the tools of a Torquemada. Thus too, with the fanaticism of religious war:—where Peter the Hermit, and Walter the Pennyless, led the way, Godfrey and Louis follow, with Bernard as their guide!

The same kind of progression has had place—and even with worse consequences, in the history of the Fanaticism of dogmas and creeds. The authors and prime agitators of controversy—the men whose names descend as an obliquy to after ages, have, with a few exceptions, possessed but a moderate title to celebrity; and, apart from the turbulence of

their tempers, or their ambition, could not have attracted the attention of mankind. But the agitation so engendered has spread; and at length none can well avoid ranging themselves, on this side or on that, of the question: great talents and real virtue are drawn into the vortex; and so it happens that, while the ostensible mischiefs of strife—the rancour and the violence of the feud are moderated, its essential evils are deepened, and are rendered permanent; and a Christian country, or community, is in this manner cast into a factious condition, and so abides, age after age. But factious religionism, how much soever it may have been tamed and curbed, does not fail to be encircled by wide spread impiety, and infidelity, as the direct effect of the scandal it exhibits. Factions, moreover, benumb the expansive powers of Christianity, and prevent its diffusion. They create too a universal entanglement, and perversion of religious notions. No inquiry is calmly prosecuted; the results of solitary meditation are not safely reported, nothing is looked at in its native form—so long as the jealousies and the interests of eight or ten ancient and corporate factions spread themselves over the field of theology. Even those few articles of Christian belief or speculation, or of abstruse science, which have not chanced to be claimed by party zeal, are often found to alarm the wakeful fears of this or that guardian of sectarism, merely because the method of argument which may have been employed in such instances is foreseen to have ■ bearing upon matters that are to be held inviolable. The opinion in itself may be innocent enough;—but the logic that sustains it is of dangerous quality.

Better quash at once the suspicious novelty, which, though it may be good and true, may open the door to—no one can say what innovations!

So timid, so feeble, so inert, so grovelling, so infatuated, is the human mind! Truth, which alone can be permanently advantageous, and which alone can reward intellectual labour, or compensate secular losses, is looked at and listened to with alarm; nor is she entertained until she has protested, ten times over, that she means to rob us of nothing we dote upon!

The fact deserves very distinct regard that, less than two hundred years ago, even so late as the close of the seventeenth century, this very same sectarian infatuation—this fanaticism of the creed and symbol, enthralled the physical and abstruse sciences, throughout Europe. No process of nature, no mechanic law, could be investigated or discussed apart from the interference of the fierce jealousies of rival schools! A chemical mixture could not change from blue to red, from transparent to opaque, an apple could not fall to the ground, nay, the planets might not swing through their orbits, without kindling angry feuds in colleges! Not only was the method of obtaining knowledge utterly misunderstood; but it was not believed, or not felt, that knowledge is always the friend of man, and his coadjutor; error his enemy. This degraded condition of the human mind was at last remedied by nothing but the bringing to bear upon the METAPHYSIC-PHYSICS of Des Cartes and Aristotle, a method of reasoning so absolutely conclusive that resistance was found to be useless. Prejudice and antiquated

jealousy did not freely yield themselves up and dissolve: they were undermined; they fell in, and were seen no more.

This deliverance of Philosophy — and it is a very recent deliverance, although effected within a particular precinct of inquiry only, extended itself rapidly over the entire field of the sciences. Whether or not immediate success attended the pursuit of knowledge, every thing was scouted but its attainment. The scientific community blushed at the ancient folly of ranging itself under rival leaders; it coalesced as one body, or phalanx, animated by one purpose, and advancing under one banner.

There could be no true philosophy, so long as the interests of sects were to be cared for; and those two powers, Truth and Party, were not in fact contemporary, scarcely a year; or they were contemporary only as Night and Day are so, through the hasty moments of twilight. Indeed the existence of factions in any department of opinion, is a sufficient proof that the true method of inquiry, in that department, has not yet been found; or at least is not generally understood.

Causes which need hardly be specified, have hitherto excluded from the precincts of Theology the reform that has spread through every department of natural science. The dogmatic fanaticism which raged at the time of the Reformation, passed down uncorrected upon the political and ecclesiastical constitutions of the northern nations of Europe, and especially upon those of England, and now firmly grasps the religious commonwealth. The violence of religious strife has indeed died away, or breaks

out only for a moment ; but no relief has yet been administered to the settled ill consequences of that delirium. So far as we are religious, the English people is a nation of sects, and our theology is necessarily the theology of faction. It is not a false theology—thank God ; but it is a theology that is embarrassed, imperfect, gloomy ;—a theology which consists of antagonist propositions, not simply true ; but true only as a contradiction of error. It is no wonder that a system of this sort, while it abundantly breeds infidelity among the educated classes, fails to spread through the mass of the population ; and but dimly, or only as a flickering candle, illumines the world.

The recent consolidation of religious liberty, while it may be hailed as an auspicious event, and likely to bring about at length the disappearance of faction, is utterly misunderstood by those who regard it as equivalent to the emancipation of Christianity. Far from being the same thing, this overthrow of ecclesiastical despotism has, in its immediate effects, as was natural, inflamed the sectarian sentiment, or has given it a new birth. The exultation of the triumphant party, and the discontent of the defeated party, have, in different modes, infused an energy into the virulence of both, which may prolong the existence of our divisions, perhaps a fifty years.*

A happier destiny may sooner break upon us ; and it is certain that an unobtrusive power has been some while at work beneath the ground of our sectarian edifices—a power which must, unless arrested, bring them down to the abyss. The philosophy of

* These pages were written before the year 1833

the schools sunk to rise no more when the true method of science gained its first indisputable triumph. But although the same method be not formally applicable to theology, yet the *principle* of it is so, and is actually in its incipient stage of application; or perhaps has gone a step beyond that stage.* The art of criticism, and the true logic of interpretation, a logic in every sense the reverse of the polemic and the metaphysic, must restore to the church, under that guidance which is never denied when ingenuously sought, the pure meaning of Scripture. The charm that cements petty communions will then dissolve; the excellence of Truth will be felt, and the fanaticism of dogmas will die away, when all men learn to hold in contempt

* It is deemed a thoroughly Baconian process to adduce, in series, all the texts that bear upon a certain article of faith, and at the end to sum up the evidence.—This is called Induction. But now if we look a little closely to the method and principle of interpretation, as applied *to each passage*, we shall find that the prime maxim of the dogmatic and scholastic divinity, which demands that every thing should be judged of according to THE ANALOGY OF FAITH, and nothing admitted which cannot be reconciled thereto, or which may by inference give countenance to a known heresy, rules throughout. This surely is not to *learn* from prophets and apostles, but to *teach* them; and it is precisely the method which swayed so long the dark realms of pseudo-philosophy. In theology we have the *forms* of the inductive method often where there is little or nothing of its substance. A good work would it be to deduce from the Novum Organon those universal principles which are indeed applicable to Intellectual and Sacred Science. Etiam dubitavit quispiam potius quàm objiciet, utrùm nos de naturali tantùm Philosophiâ, an etiam de Scientiis reliquis, Logicis, Ethicis, Politicis, secundum viam nostram perficiendis loquamur. AT NOS CERTE, DE UNIVERSIS HÆC, QUÆ DICTA SUNT, INTELLIGIMUS.

every thing in religion but the ascertained sense of God's Revelation. Diversities of opinion, and diversities of religious taste, must indeed remain so long as there are differences of intellectual and moral power; but these will engender no heat, and will produce no divisions, when all minds shall be moving on toward one and the same centre.

It would not have been anticipated as possible, that among those who professed to reverence the Scriptures, a superstition such as that of the papacy should at all have had existence. But history, in too many instances, and in this, contradicts the most reasonable calculations, and shews how far the perversity of man may thwart the beneficent provisions of Heaven. In like manner it might have been thought that the very constitution of the Inspired Volume, not less than its express precepts, would have precluded the factions that have rent the Church in every age. What we here intend by—The Constitution of Scripture, deserves our attention.

Let it then be assumed that two main purposes were to be secured in giving a written rule of faith to mankind; namely, first, an infallible conveyance of that PRINCIPAL SENSE of the Revelation which is essential to genuine piety; and secondly, such a conveyance of the ADJUNCTIVE, or secondary portions of religious truth as should render despotic determinations on the one side, and scrupulous schisms on the other, manifestly unreasonable. We have to see in what manner both these ends are provided for by the actual constitution of the canon of Scripture.

It is saying little to affirm that no composition, whether historical or didactic—if the language in which it is written be understood, fails to convey to readers of ordinary intelligence the principal intention of the writer ; unless indeed he himself be wanting in sense, or designedly conceals his meaning under ambiguous or enigmatic terms. This is clearly implied when language is affirmed to be a good and sufficient means of communication between mind and mind. To assert any thing less, were to stultify humanity, and to derange the entire machinery of the social system. All men might as well become anchorets at once, if indeed language is found to be, at the best, a fallacious medium of intellectual exchange.

And what is true of oral communication, must be true also—with a very small deduction, of written communication. Moreover, what may be affirmed concerning the written conveyance of thoughts among contemporaries, becomes liable only to an inconsiderable discount, when we have to do with the writings of past ages ; and even this discount is much reduced if the composition in question forms part of a vast collection of contemporary literature. As it is certain that men must be fools or knaves when permanent misunderstandings arise among them, in regard to the *main intention* of their personal communications ; so is it certain that the principal scope of a book, ancient or modern, is always to be known, where both the writer and the reader are ingenuous.

Nothing less, we say, then, than such a perversity of judgment as renders the powers of language nugatory, can, in any case, give rise to an entire

misunderstanding of an author's principal sense. Admit only these ordinary conditions—that the writer was honest, and of sound mind, that he was master of the language he employs, and that he made it his serious business to convey to his reader, in the best way he could, certain capital articles of information, whether historical or moral ; and then it follows, without an exceptive case, that his meaning, as to those prime articles, is readily attainable by whoever himself owns common sense, and has a competent acquaintance with the writer's language. To take, for example, any one of the canonical writers, it is absolutely certain that the leading facts or dogmas which he means to teach, stand upon the surface of his composition. But has disagreement arisen, in regard to these main facts or dogmas? nothing less than the egregious wilfulness of the human mind can have caused it.

On the ground of the admitted principles of language, and of historic evidence, any one of the Gospels, with the Acts, and any one of the larger epistles, would indubitably have handed down to us the SUBSTANCE of apostolic Christianity. If it be not so—a thousand tomes could not have done it:—if it be not so, we might stand by with indifference, and see another Amrou throw his brand upon a pyre that should contain every existing relic of antiquity.

But the Divine indulgence has far exceeded the necessary bounds in affording to mankind the materials of sacred knowledge. No parsimony is to be complained of on the part of the Instructor; and nothing is wanted but an ordinary measure of ingenuousness in the scholar. The great articles of

belief and duty have come to us through the instrumentality of nearly forty writers, to each of whom was allowed his undisturbed *mental individuality*;—his personal temper and taste, his own style, both of sentiment and of language, together with whatever speciality of either, he might draw from the influence of time and country. Each writer, while the track of his thoughts is steered by an unseen hand, moves on in a spontaneous course. Could any provision be added to this arrangement which should avail to exclude the possibility of a failure in transmitting the elements of religious knowledge? Let it be imagined that, out of the forty, two or three, or even seven, were obscure, abrupt, elliptical, mystic: yet all will not be so: for one whose style is emblematic or difficult, there will—on common principles of probability—be five that are natural and perspicuous.

But we have asked for another security against failure in the conveyance of the main points of religion; and we find it in the fact that this congeries of witnesses has been drawn, not from one century, but from the course of fifteen. Whatever diversity in modes of thought time can impart, is by this means included. So broad is the base of that pyramid which was to stand through all ages, pointing man to the skies! Are we then to be told that what prophets and apostles believed, and what they taught to their contemporaries, and what they intended to transmit to posterity, comes down to us under an impenetrable obscurity? No miracle would be so hard of belief as this.

It need not be added, that the correlative security furnished by ancient versions and interpretations, in endless abundance and variety, surrounds these documents of our faith, every way precluding the chances of error in relation to the Principal Sense of the whole.

There is an infirmity of the mind which impels us, on some occasions, and especially on the most important, to overlook or to distrust those very circumstances whereon our welfare really depends; while we anxiously search for provisions of safety that either are utterly unattainable, or that would be pernicious, if possessed. How often have feeble minds—and perhaps some strong minds, wished that a miraculous interposition had been accorded, such as should have exempted the Inspired Writings from the accidents that attend other compositions, and that affect ancient literature in the course of its transmission from age to age! Given at first by supernatural means—why has not the Bible been guarded by miracle through the period of its descent to our times?

Need we reply—because it is from these very disparagements—if such they should be deemed, that are to be gathered the best evidences of the genuineness of the document itself. And it might be added—because the accidental difficulties or obscurities that belong to the Scriptures, in common with all other literary remains of antiquity, have a direct tendency—if we will but admit it, to put to shame the senseless superstition, the doting upon particles, and worshipping of iotas, which makes duty and

faith to hang upon this or that etymology or syllable.*

Of all impracticable miracles, if the solecism may be pardoned, the most impracticable and inconceivable would be that which should exempt a mass of ancient writings from those accidents whence ambiguity or difficulty of interpretation, in single instances, arises. Any such interposition, to have been effectual, must not only have extended through the original document, imparting to each sentence, phrase, and word, an insulated perfection, and

* It is perhaps unnecessary to point out the conspicuous distinction between an overweening zeal for this or that interpretation of single passages or phrases—and the laudable endeavour of the critic to ascertain, first, the *real text* of an inspired writer; and then, the actual sense in which his words were understood by the persons to whom they were addressed. We have affirmed above, that the Scriptures, like all other rational compositions, will not fail to convey their principal sense to every ingenuous mind, *if the language in which they were written is really and fully known to the reader*. Now the important labours of the Biblical critic are directed to this very purpose of putting the modern reader, so far as is possible, into the position of the ancient reader. Dogmatic interpretation should not—cannot reasonably commence, until the language, with all its essential proprieties, is brought within our familiar cognizance. If there be any usage of words, any principle of construction, any special sense of terms, the knowledge of which is important to an exact grammatical rendering of the sacred text, the utmost diligence should be employed in fixing beyond doubt the rule, with its exceptions. When erudition has done its utmost on such occasions, it has done nothing more than bring our modern mind into contact with the mind of the writer. The critic, so far as his labours extend, resuscitates the Greek of the apostolic age; and gives us the benefit of listening to the living voice of Paul, Peter, and John.

imbuing each verse with a sort of intellectual phosphorescence; but must have pervaded all times and places, guiding the hand of every drowsy copyist, and inspiring every translator. Nor would even this have been enough; for the miracle, to have subserved any practical purpose, must have reached, as well to the reader of Scripture, as to the writers and transcribers! All minds must have enjoyed the very same measure of native power, and must have possessed the same preparatory knowledge, and the same simplicity of purpose, and the same temper, industry, and power of retention! First, the book is a perpetual miracle;—and then every reader is a prophet! The simpler method, surely, would have been for a voice to have sounded incessantly from the sky, repeating every hour the monotony of Truth!

The Divine machinery is of another sort; and our gratitude, informed by reason, should follow the steps of that wisdom which adapts common instruments as well to extraordinary, as to ordinary occasions; and so adapts them, as to include various ends in one and the same system of means.

We possess the rational satisfaction of perusing the history of our Lord's ministry in the words of four writers; yet this important advantage is taxed with the inconvenience (if such it be) of presenting frequent diversities of circumstance, order, and phraseology. But can we really wish that the evangelic records had been so exempted from the operation of ordinary causes as would have been requisite for excluding every diversity of this sort? Are we willing that these, the most important of all historical compositions, should forfeit the special charac-

terristics that mark them as original and genuine writings, for the sake of our being saved the inquietudes of a superstitious temper? Those who, with a blind and perilous pertinacity, demand a verbal exactitude, meet a proper rebuke when they find that evangelists and apostles, with the freedom that is natural to truth and honesty, are negligent of matters that in no way affect the vast affairs committed to their trust. Critics may be frivolous or captious; but the Apostles were no triflers!

Who, or who that respects the laws of testimony, does not gladly turn from secondary evidence, even if more methodical and perspicuous, to original evidence, although charged, as it almost always is, when genuine, with incompleteness in the details, with apparent inconsistencies, and with a hundred unexplained allusions? The compiler of history, in an after age, is an INTERPRETER of the story: not so the contemporary and original narrator of facts; who seldom or never turns aside from the vivid objects that fill his mind, to provide for the ignorance, or to prevent the cavils of posterity. Unless then we be slaves of superstition, we shall hail with pleasure those very imperfections—imperfections they are not, which mark the canonical books—historical, didactic, and epistolatory, as unquestionably genuine. Thankfully shall we embrace those obscurities which are the very seal of Truth. Deprived of its difficulties, we might be staggered in admitting the Bible to be what it professes.

And yet, from this distinctive glory of the documents of our religion are drawn, by the overweening dogmatism of zealots, endless occasions of strife!

That abrupt form which belongs to original evidence, is a rock whereon wranglers of every age have split. Some usage, some circumstance or ceremonial, infinitely trivial, but which a compiler of history might probably have supplied or explained, is left open to conjecture in the apostolic record. Alas the lamentable omission! Why did the inspired writers grudge us the single decisive particle which must have excluded doubt? So does the zealot repine over the sacred page! And yet in public he loudly denies any such deficiency of evidence in reference to the disputed point; for among his followers, and in presence of the simple, he is hoarse in protesting the demonstrable certainty of his assumptions. Language, he assures us, has no means left for making plainer than it is, what was the apostolic usage in this matter!

Instruction might be drawn from an exhibition of certain instances in which, if we had actually possessed fewer means of information than we do, we might have pronounced decisively upon points that are rendered questionable by the additional evidence! If one apostle only had spoken, we should have been free to dogmatize stoutly; but two have glanced at the matter; and we are plunged into doubt! Sometimes, as we have seen, the sacred writers say too little; and anon too much! The very copiousness of our means of knowledge deducts in such cases from our certainty; that is to say, it disturbs the presumption of ignorance, and baffles the arrogance of bigotry. Are there those—one might almost believe it from the style they use, who so love darkness rather than light, that they would willingly sur-

render the three testimonies, or the five, which bear upon a controversy, so that they might, with unrebuked fervour, assume and assert their factious opinion?

A signal advantage it is, that the Scriptures—of the New Testament especially, have traversed the perilous waters of Time, not on one keel only, but a thousand. No ancient text has been so abundantly secured from corruption as the text of the New Testament: in the present state of critical science, who entertains a doubt of its substantial integrity? But the inevitable consequence of this multifarious transmission of copies has been the origination of innumerable verbal variations. Here again the superstition which dotes upon jots and tittles is broken in upon. Heaven has treated us as reasonable men; and it supposes we shall prefer what is indeed valuable, to what is trivial. We receive a most important confirmation of our faith—but are therefore denied the fond satisfaction of possessing a Text for every particle of which, and for the position of every syllable and letter, Divine authority might be challenged. Are we still disquieted and discontented? It is manifest then that our estimate of what is desirable differs widely from that of the Author of Revelation. HE has bestowed upon us the better and the greater advantage;—we fretfully demand the less.

While it is certain that the Scriptures will, like all other rational compositions, convey their principal purport to every ingenuous mind, it is not less certain that these books, in common with other remains of ancient literature, must present thousands and tens of thousands of questionable points, critical, historical, or dogmatic. On this ground industry and erudition

find their proper field; and what task can be more noble than that of endeavouring to fix, or to elucidate, the sense of writings in which, beside their unparalleled merits as human compositions, are imbedded the inexhaustible treasures of heavenly wisdom! How honourably are our modern Christian Rabbis employed in bringing to light, from day to day, some hitherto neglected particle of the true riches; and how thankfully should we, the unlearned, receive these products of the diligence of our Teachers! The beneficent provision thus made for supplying new matter of instruction to the biblical teacher, so that the zest and expectation of the taught need never become languid, might well be noticed. Sacred Science, in all its departments, having been diffused miscellaneously through the substance of a volume so large as the Bible, and an ancient volume too, the time will perhaps never come—certainly it has not yet come, in which it might be said, that the sense of every portion has been finally determined.

All would be well if the simple principle could be remembered—That although the perfection of knowledge in matters of religion is an object of worthy ambition to every Christian for himself, something immensely less than the perfection of religious knowledge is all we are entitled to demand from others, as the condition of holding with them Christian fellowship.

The vexatious question of Terms of Communion presents one of those instances, and there are many such, in which, while formidable difficulties attach to the theory, none whatever, or none that are serious,

are found—unless created, to belong to the practical operation. So it is often that Science stands embarrassed, where Art moves on at ease. Science is indeed the mistress of Art ; nevertheless she should be willing to receive lessons of homely dexterity from her menial. Men of speculation are always splitting upon the reefs in these shallows. Presuming that the *Abstract* is always purer, and of more avail than the *Concrete*, they reform, not for the better, but the worse ; and, impatient of ideal faults, plunge themselves and others into real and fatal perplexities. How often does the unthinking artisan employ simple expedients which the philosopher could never have taught him ; and actually carries his work triumphantly through theoretic impossibilities ! And how often, in the business of government, does common sense, with ancient usage as its guardian, prove itself a vastly better mistress of affairs, than abstruse calculation !

A Consistory of Divines might spend a century in digesting, first, a profession of faith, and then a code of morals, and a rule of discipline, such as should stand as a universal law of Church communion. In the mean time a Christian society, fraught with the vital principle of piety, and faithful to itself, and to its trust, far from awaiting impatiently the result of the conference, might rather hail demur after demur, and fervently hope that the sittings of this Sanhedrim of christendom might be protracted to the consummation of all things ! Nothing that is truly important need be foregone until the creed and code should be brought to perfection : nothing that we need sigh for would be

conferred upon us by the boon, when at length it should be granted.

The question—How may the Church be preserved from desecration? if propounded in cases where nothing exists that is indeed holy—nothing but the rites and semblances of Christianity, is one which may well be reserved for an idle day : and no such question need be discussed at all where the religion of the New Testament, with its faith and its morality, actually subsist.

The distinction between Christians and others is obvious, or obvious enough for the practical purposes of ecclesiastical government, if looked at in the concrete, and under the daylight of common sense ; but it eludes research if submitted to analysis ! The *living* are never much at a loss in recognising the *living* ; but no artificial process will avail to enable the dead to exercise any such discriminative office. Is it demanded to frame a creed and a rule by the due application of which secular men—frivolous and perfunctory, shall be able to keep charge of the fold of Christ, and to open and shut the doors of the Church ? Absurd problem ! Idle endeavour ! The CHURCH wants no such rule, and needs no such guardianship ; and a better employment may easily be found than that of setting a watch, and putting a seal, at the mouth of a SEPULCHRE !

The duty of those, whether they be the few or the many, to whose hands are entrusted ecclesiastical powers, is not that of a Rhadamanthus. Responsibility does not stretch beyond natural powers, and as it is quite certain that men have no power to search each other's bosoms ; they should not think

themselves charged with any such endeavour. The pretender and the hypocrite belong always to the Divine Jurisdiction ; the Church will be asked to give no account of them, so long as they successfully conceal the fatal fact of their insincerity. The exceptive case of the hypocrite therefore excluded, not a shadow of difficulty, or of *practical* difficulty, attends the discharge of Church guardianship. Let but a community, whether more or less extended in its sphere, be pure in manners—pure, not sanctimonious ; let the Scriptures be devoutly read by its private members, and honestly expounded by its teachers ; and in this case it will be very little annoyed by the intrusion, either of heretical or licentious candidates. A Church of this order offers nothing which such persons are ambitious to possess ; and they will stand aloof. Tests will be superseded ; and the rod of discipline brought out only on the rarest occasions.

It is the heat of controversy between sect and sect, that generates the malevolence which—according to our definition, is essential to Fanaticism, and which distinguishes it from Enthusiasm. Yet there are cases where, without this extrinsic excitement, extravagant modes of opinion have assumed a gloomy and irritated aspect. Instances of this sort have of late abounded, and some reference to them seems proper.—

—A singular revolution has marked the progress of religious sentiment among us within the last few years ; for while the tendency to admit enthusiastic or fanatical sentiments belonged, till of late, almost exclusively to the lower and uneducated classes, this

disposition has recently deserted the quarters of poverty and ignorance, and taken hold of those who are clothed in purple, and who frequent palaces. The Fanaticism of Want, and the Fanaticism of Plenty, though identical in substance, naturally differ much in form. The characteristics of each are worthy of notice.

Far too little is known or recollected of the feelings that are working in the bosoms of the abject and wretched poor : if we thought more on this subject we should look with dread at the placid surface which the social mass commonly exhibits. The personal endurance of famine, cold, and discomfort, from day to day, and the worse anguish of seeing these evils endured by children, breeds a feeling, such that, did it but get vent, it would heave the firmest political edifices from their foundations : but the writhings of tortured hearts are repressed, or diverted, and only on rare occasions burst forth in tumultuous acts. With many, indeed, all sentiment and moral consciousness gives way under the pressure of woe ; or is dissipated by debauchery ; and the soul sinks even below the level of the wretchedness of the body : hope, the spring of life, long ago took her flight, and every ember of joy and virtue is quenched.

But with some of the Pariah class (too numerous in every community) enough of the remembrance of hope survives to impart sensitiveness to despair. The poor man, though he feels every day that he has given ground a little in his combat with Want, and must renew the strife to-morrow with wasted strength, and from a worse position,

and although, when he throws himself on his pallet, he knows that the Misery that haunts his hut does not sleep while he sleeps, but will be busy, from the evening till the morning, in sapping the broken fabric of his comfort ; although he knows and feels this, yet the faint conception of a happier lot still haunts him, and he asks—Might not I also be blessed ? If he does not distinctly expect a reverse of his doom, he still meditates the possibility of an amended condition. He is like the shipwrecked mariner who takes his seat, day after day, on the highest point of his rocky prison, and from sun-rise to sun-set, peruses the horizon, not certain but what a sail may appear, and may make toward the islet of his despair. Such things—let us believe it, are felt and borne by myriads near us, even while we are gaily gliding from scene to scene of gain or festivity !

It is upon elements like these that political agitations work ; and our amazement should be, not that once and again, in the course of years, tumult and outrage break forth ; but rather that the public peace is so seldom violated ; and that when disturbed, any bounds are set to the vindictive passions of the million who have so long suffered in silence.

Experience has abundantly proved, even to the conviction of irreligious statesmen, that the influence of religious motives upon the lowest rank—taken at large, is decisively favourable to public order, and is the most powerful prop of civil government. None now call this great political truth in question, or none but those whose enormous usurpations are of a kind that can be secured only by imposing brutalizing degradations upon the helot class. None

now deny this first axiom of political science—that religion is the bond of peace ; none denies it, we say, but the Slave-holder.

The cases are very rare in which a just and patriotic government (or even a despotic one) might not estimate its security by the rule of the amount of religion existing among the labouring population of the country. There have been momentary exceptions ; but they are quite intelligible, and when properly understood, they confirm the rule which makes it the interest and duty, as well of the legislative as of the administrative powers, to maintain, and to extend, and to invigorate, by all proper means, the Public Religion.

The Fanaticism of poverty, which takes a political turn, only under very unusual provocations, somewhat more frequently offers itself to view within its proper circle of religious sentiment. The Gospel is the chartered patrimony of the poor ; and to affirm that the motives of religion, as they bear upon the cares, privations, and contempt of a low condition, ordinarily pass into a malign state, would be the same thing as to deny the divine origin of this Gospel. The contrary is most decisively the fact. The partial evil has existence only under peculiar circumstances, that is to say, when the theology promulgated among the people is of a murky and arrogant kind ; when one set of ideas singly, and those the least benign, is presented to the mind of the people ; and when, either by abstruse dogmas, or by rigid and repulsive usages, by the monotonous assertion of mysterious exclusive privilege, and by a stern, scrupulous, and sanctimonious discipline (a discipline

more careful of faith than of morals) it is only by such means, that the melancholy impatience belonging to social degradation and distress, gives a dark colour to the poor man's piety.

But the favourites of Fortune, as well as her outcasts, have their Fanaticism ; for there is a well-bred religious delirium, as well as one that is rude and squalid.

Christianity rarely affects the opulent and the noble, except during disastrous epochs ; or in those gloomy hours of a nation's history, when all things earthly are in jeopardy. It would seem as if nothing less than the most vehement agitations could be enough to dispel the illusions that beset luxury and honour. Be this as it may, the coincidence of causes deserves to be taken account of which, in such seasons of fear and tumult, affords to the Christian of elevated rank a necessary counterpoise for his religious emotions, and tends to impart soberness to his piety. This indispensable counterpoise is furnished to Christians of lower station by the cares and labours of vulgar life. But the perils and vicissitudes of a revolutionary era bring home to the patrician orders a sense of the precariousness of earthly good such as, during the tranquil flow of events, they are hardly ever conscious of. At these times a difficult part is to be performed, and dangerous measures, often, are to be attempted, which fully engage every energy of the soul. It is then that public persons are thrown upon their principles, and are compelled to look to the ultimate reasons of their conduct ; and in fact are taught certain severe lessons of virtue, never dreamed of in the summer

seasons of the world's affairs. It is at such times that religious sentiments, if they exist at all in the bosoms of the great, are brought into act, and are, by that means, preserved from exaggeration.

This general order of things being kept in view, we may the more readily understand the somewhat singular appearance which serious piety has assumed of late in a portion of the upper classes of England. The time we have lived through has indeed been a season of momentous change, and has furnished excitements of the most unusual kind. And yet, to the people of the British Islands, the throes of the world and the sanguinary convulsions of the nations, have offered a SPECTACLE, rather than an arena of action and trial. During a full forty years, the English have stood crowding their cliffs in mute astonishment, and have gazed upon the distant prospect of blazing palaces, or demolished thrones—of embattled fields, or of cities deluged by civil feud ;—they have caught the muttering thunders of war and revolution ; but still have been able to turn the eye homeward, and have seen the smiling serenity of order and plenty spread over all their land. We have indeed entertained momentary alarms, and have groaned under burdens ; but have hardly been called to meet the brunt of danger :—the stress of affairs has not lain upon us, so as to engage the higher virtues.

The excitements of an era of commotion have been felt ;—yet apart from its proper correctives. The spread of religious feeling among the rich and noble may fairly be attributed, in measure, to the salutary impression which the portentous aspect of

events has made upon all minds. Yet it has been an *impression* without a *conflict*—an awe, but not an exercise. There has been no arduous part to perform, no sacrifice to make, no privation to be endured. All this while the religious noble have reclined upon a couch as soft as that of the irreligious noble ;—the silken banner of their ease has floated in a summer's sky :—they have fared as daintily, and have been served as sumptuously, as if their portion were all in this world :—they have undulated from theatre to theatre of pious entertainment, and have met acclamations and smiles ;—yet nothing has compelled them to act or to suffer like men.

There can be little room then for surprise if the result of this peculiar conjunction of influences has been to give play to exorbitances of opinion among those of the rich and noble who have at all admitted religious impressions. Some, we cannot doubt, the ferment of whose piety has brought our Christianity into contempt, would have honoured their profession of it by exhibiting the courage and devotion of confessors, had public events been of a kind to lead them into any such arduous sphere of action : these persons have been fain to yearn for miracles in easy times, that offer no crowns of martyrdom.

Religious sentiments in a highly excited state, and not counterpoised by the vulgar cares and sorrows of humble life—not taught common sense by common occasions, is little likely to stop short at mere enthusiasm :—the fervour becomes fanatical almost by necessity. The progress of the feelings in such cases is not difficult to be divined.—That sensitiveness to public opinion, and that nice regard to

personal reputation, and that keen consciousness of ridicule, which belong to the upper classes, and upon which their morality is chiefly founded, tend, in the instance of the pious oligarch, to generate vivid resentments when he feels that, having over-stepped the boundaries of good sense and sobriety, he has drawn upon himself the public laugh. The intolerable glance of scorn from his peers, to which he has found himself exposed, must be—not retorted indeed—not avenged; but yet returned in some manner compatible with religious ideas. It is at this very point of commuted revenge that fanaticism takes its rise. Interpretations the most excessive, expectations the most dire, comminations the most terrible, and a line of conduct arrogantly absurd, set wounded patrician pride again upon its due elevation—repair the damage it has sustained; and surround it with a hedge of thorns.

If it may be said that the English character possesses a peculiar nobleness; and if it be true that the English aristocracy stands foremost as the aristocracy of Europe; and if moreover it may be believed that Christianity has a stronger hold of the English than of any other people, may not a time reasonably be looked for when the special excellences of the national character, illustrated by rank and high culture, shall admit—without taint of fanaticism—the elevating influence of unfeigned piety, and so exhibit to the world, under the very fairest and the brightest forms, the true magnanimity of virtue!

To what extent the advance of Christianity among the nations has been obstructed by the form into

which it has been thrown by its professors, none can presume to determine. None knows how many perplexed minds, distracted with doubts, have received their final and fatal shock from the spectacle of folly, pride, and strife which the Church has exhibited!—None can calculate what might have been achieved by the zeal and energy that have been consumed in dissensions, or quashed by despotism. Much less can any mortal dare to surmise how far the outraged clemency of heaven has, by these same means, been averted altogether from the theatre of human affairs, so that blessings have been withheld—the efficacious influence denied, and the world abandoned, through long ages, to its melancholy course of superstition and of crime!

The dependency of cause upon cause in the vast machinery of the moral system, lies far beyond the reach of human curiosity. That day must be waited for which is to reveal the springs of the movements that now meet the eye, and perplex our meditations. But might not a time come when those who readily confess themselves to sustain, as Christians, a responsibility toward the world at large, and who are even forward in claiming their several shares of this responsibility—when such, pausing a moment on their course of zealous enterprise, shall, with an ingenuous dread of meeting at last the Divine reproof, instead of approval, set themselves to inquire whether the Christianity they are sending from land to land is not loaded with some fatal disparagement, such as forbids its wide extension?

But it is asked—Who is competent, or who commands the means of regenerating our ecclesiastical

existence? Where rests a blame, of which no man has the power to rid himself? The answer to such an inquiry is not difficult; for the individual culpability which rests upon Christians, living under a perverted state of things, is that of resisting the appeals of common sense.—The personal guilt is that of harbouring fond predilections, and of jealously quashing any course of inquiry that is foreseen as likely to bring sectarian interests into jeopardy. The personal blame is of the very same kind that attaches to the maintenance of other species of vicious infatuation. If the actual amount of this criminality be small in the instance of the untaught and the unthinking multitude, it reaches a height we will not estimate, with the few whose duty it is to care for, and lead the many. Thus it has been in every age.—Evils, grievous in themselves, and frightful in their ultimate consequences, have been palliated by those who should have checked them;—have been admired, or have been cloaked; have been trumpeted, or have been excused; but never honestly and unsparingly dealt with.

No principle of morals can be more unsound than that which would excuse a man from guilt, who cares not to rid himself of prejudices or of scruples that are ruinous to his fellows. If we do not owe the cultivation of common sense to ourselves, we assuredly owe it to those around us. No man can play the fool without peril to his neighbours; and when the Christian does so, he flings perdition on every side of him.

Those questions of ecclesiastical polity which involve real difficulties, and which wise men might

hesitate to touch—uncertain and complicated as are all human affairs, may well be reserved until other points have been disposed of which demand nothing but the putting in force of the plainest principles of reason and piety. Who shall say how much light would suddenly come in upon the obscurer matters, if once the simpler were taken out of the way?

To adduce the specific instances, and to deal with them equitably, would consist neither with the limits nor the purpose of this volume. It is principles only we have to do with; and in the establishment of general truths, must still adhere to the rule of drawing examples from the remotest quarters. In closing then this Section, let a single instance, illustrative of the purport of it, be glanced at.

The ancient Church might stand excused from the blame of defending, with too much acrimony, the great elements of Christian faith, assailed as they were by a hundred heresies, audacious and absurd; and let indulgence be afforded in relation to those divisions in matters of discipline which might fairly perplex honest minds. We look now to instances of that sort which entailed extreme contempt upon Christianity, and sullied its glory, for the sake of pertinacious scruples, ineffably trivial. If the case adduced be thought altogether without parallel in modern times, let it be rejected as impertinent.

Be it imagined that the philosophic Longinus had learned in a vague manner that the "Christians" professed the hope of a glorious immortality—that they held elevated opinions concerning the Divine nature, and that they treated with derision the idle

mythologies and immoral superstitions of all nations;* and he is told that this system is affirmed to have been imparted immediately from God. He expects then that, whether the alleged revelation be true or false, it will offer nothing but what is momentous and simply great: he is justified in expecting nothing else. While he yet revolves his purpose of inquiry, there falls by chance into his hands an epistle addressed by a distinguished contemporary—a Christian

* Juvenal and Lucian had led the way in the work which the Christian writers achieved, of consigning the Grecian mythology to contempt. Popular veneration toward the gods had almost entirely been loosened by raileries which drew their irresistible force from common sense. When the Christians brought the heavy arms of pure truth to bear upon these decayed absurdities, the victory could not be long doubtful. The Church at this time commanded the services of many writers, qualified by vigorous talents, wit, and extensive learning, for the part assigned them. Some of the pieces then produced with the design of exposing polytheism to merited contempt, are of the highest merit.—Such for example as—The admirable and erudite work of Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*, addressed to the Antonines:—The *Oratio ad Græcos* of Tatian:—The caustic *Irrisio Philos. Gentil.* of Hermias, which, though aimed at the philosophic sects, went also to undermine the popular superstitions.—Justin Martyr claims a distinguished place in the list, especially on account of his excellent Parænetic to the Greeks. The *Admonitio ad Græcos* of the learned Clemens Alexandrinus is of great value, and contains a fund of various erudition. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, takes his part in the same labour. Tertullian mightily assails the folly and impurity of the popular worship; and not least is the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. These, and other erudite and eloquent labours of the early church, which no doubt highly conduced to the ultimate triumph of the Gospel throughout the empire, merit—more than admiration—PERUSAL.

bishop, to a colleague. The writer, known to him already by common fame, stands entitled on every ground to respect. Head of the Alexandrian Church, and therefore second to few or none in official importance, a man of extensive learning too—no barbarian; but versed, like himself, in the poets, orators, and philosophers of Greece:—a man of tried integrity, who had endured severe sufferings and banishment in defence of his faith; a man moreover of settled moderation, and calm judgment, one who was appealed to by all parties as umpire.—Such was Dionysius of Alexandria;—and as such, not improbably, might he have been known to his contemporary, Longinus.*

If then indeed Christianity be a sublime doctrine, if it be the revelation of a future life; if it be a philosophy imparted by God himself to man, it must dignify its adherents, it must imbue them with a grave and manly reason, it must exempt them from the servile and childish superstitions that enslave the vulgar. Fraught with these proper anticipations, the philosophic inquirer opens the letter of the Alexandrian prelate.† Although not qualified justly to estimate those expressions of meekness and simplicity which present themselves on the face of it—a style so unlike that of the schools, his candour is

* As Principal of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Dionysius had early diffused his reputation very widely. He was esteemed one of the most distinguished of Origen's pupils. Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* l. vi. c. 35—40.

† The canonic epistle of Dionysius, quoted above, is of unquestioned authenticity. It is accessible to the reader in *Routh's Reliquiæ Sacræ*, Vol. II.

conciliated by the modesty of a man whose station might have rendered him arrogant.*

“ Dionysius to Basilides, my beloved son, and brother, and colleague in the Lord—greeting.—You wrote to me, my faithful and learned son, concerning the hour at which fasting should cease in celebrating the Paschal solemnity. You report that certain of the fraternity (of Pentapolis) affirm that the fast should end, and our rejoicings commence, at the moment of cock-crowing ; while others say it should be from the evening. The brethren of Rome, as the former assert, are accustomed to await the crowing of the cock ; whereas, on our part, as you say, an earlier hour is observed. Your desire is to ascertain with precision *the very moment*, and to fix decisively the proper hour ; but to do so is a difficult and uncertain thing. All are indeed perfectly agreed on this one point—That, from the instant of our Lord’s resurrection, festivity and gladness should commence ; and that, on the other hand, fasting and humiliation of spirit are proper in the preceding time. But yourself, in your epistle—versed as you are in the divine evangelic records, have shewn that nothing is to be certainly gathered from the Gospels

* Dionysius, after giving advices on sundry points of discipline, then deemed important, thus concludes—“ In these things (concerning which, to do us honour, not because you are yourself unable to judge, you have propounded questions) I advance my opinion, not as Master—*διδάσκαλος*, but with all simplicity, and as it is becoming that we should, on terms of mutuality, discuss any subject of debate. Concerning this my opinion you, learned son, when you have considered it, will write to me again, either approving my decision, or proposing a better.” How well, had this style been copied by Church dignitaries !

concerning the hour of the resurrection. The Evangelists, in their several modes of narrating the event, declare that all who, at different times, visited the sepulchre, found the Lord already risen. Yet we assume that they neither disagree, nor oppose each other as to the fact; and inasmuch as the point has become the subject of controversy, as if there were a want of consistency among the Evangelists, let us, with due humility and caution, endeavour to trace out their real agreement."

Then follows a careful examination of the evidence, in concluding which the good bishop manifestly endeavours so to pronounce upon the perplexing matter as should corroborate godly discipline, without absolutely precluding indulgence toward the feeble, or even the lax. "Those," says he, "who, being presently wearied, hasten to break their fast, even before midnight, we must blame as negligent and incontinent. It is not a little, according to the adage, to fall short in the course, *by a little*. But on the contrary, those who hold out until the fourth watch of the night, we deem to be noble and strenuous. Yet will we not angrily assail (*μὴ πάνυ διανοχλῶμεν*) any who, either from want of strength, or of fixed resolution, seek refreshment sooner."

These are the tones of moderation and of wisdom; and the style well becomes the Christian pastor. But what was the controversy itself? and what impression must the anxious agitation of questions like these have made upon men of enlarged understanding, who looked at the new religion from a distance, and with cold curiosity? Such men would have cast away the epistle of Dionysius with indignant scorn,

and have said—"Is this your vaunted Christianity? Is it to maintain a system of servile frivolity that you die at the stake? Do you ask us to become Christians? as well turn Jews:—and how much better remain philosophers!"

The fault in the instance we have adduced was not want of temper; for we must admire the mild and conciliatory tone of the writer, vested as he was with authority; nor was it a fault to endeavour to ascertain—if the means of doing so had been at hand, any circumstance of an event, which of itself was beyond all others, worthy of earnest regard. But the error—and a fatal error in its consequences, was that of attaching *religious importance* to a particular which confessedly lay beyond the range of revelation, and had been made no part of Christian duty. Not only was the point abstractedly trivial, but it was the subject of no divine injunction. How could it be imagined, unless through a circuit of false assumptions, that conscience was implicated in an observance concerning which, not only was there no explicit command, but no certain evidence, bearing upon the fact whereon the observance rested? Even granting the paschal solemnities to have been acceptable religious services, and granting it to have been a pious act to fast in commemoration of the Lord's death and burial, and to celebrate his return to life with hymns, illuminations, and other festivities; yet, as by the acknowledgment of all, the precise moment in which sorrow was turned into gladness could not be ascertained, and must remain a mere matter of surmise, was it not an egregious violation of common sense to propound such a point as the subject

of controversy, and the occasion of ecclesiastical disunion?

Dionysius, it is true, writes and decides much more like a Christian, than like a supercilious dignitary, and if all had been such as himself, the foolish disagreement must soon have been forgotten. But what was likely to happen within the distracted parish of Basilides? A few perhaps, the lovers of peace, would hail with joy the patriarchal decision. Not so the fervent and the dogmatic; not so those whose piety meant nothing apart from virulence. Such—and how many such are there in every community?—would listen to the canonic letter, when publicly read in the Church, with clouded visages; they would exchange among themselves glances of insolent disapproval; they would cluster about the church doors after the assembly had broke up, and would gather to themselves open-mouthed hearers, and would inveigh against the easiness and worldly indifference of men in high station:—they would impeach the motives and the piety, first of the Alexandrian patriarch, and then of his surrogate—their own pastor. The intrinsic merits of the question would be hotly agitated, and its vital importance be insisted upon:—the consciences of the feeble and the scrupulous, of women and slaves, would be entangled, and placed at the disposal of the despotic leaders of the sect. These leaders, committed to a course of open opposition, would find it necessary to have recourse to every means of exaggeration and irritation, tending to sustain the zeal of their adherents. A breach with the Church would be deemed indispensable: fellowship must be refused, first with

the general body of believers; next with those who, though holding mainly with themselves in the question at issue, yet hesitated to adjudge Christendom entire to perdition on account of its error in this single point. Lastly—if indeed the absurdity of intolerance ever reaches an ultimate stage, lastly, all correspondence must be cut off with whoever would not denounce the moderate middle men above named. In the end, the little flaming nucleus of immaculate rigidity, fasting till broad day of Easter Sunday, and blessing itself in the straitness of its circle, would be able to look down upon all the world, and upon all the church, as wrong and lost! Meanwhile the amiable Dionysius grieves, and prays too for the contumacious band. But should he not remember that the faction drew its importance from his own error in granting, for a moment, that Christian duty and conscience could be at all concerned in a controversy so frivolous? Should he not have known, that if men are encouraged by persons of sense and authority to attach weight to idle scrupulosities, they will not fail to forget solid morality, as well as to spurn meekness and love?

The follies of one age differ from the follies of another in names only. Let those boast of the intelligence of the nineteenth century, who think it furnishes no parallels to the infatuations of the third! It is often anxiously asked—What hinders the progress of the Gospel in a country like our own, and in an age of liberty and knowledge? It might be enough to reply, that the hinderance is drawn from the form of discord which has been thrown over it by some of its most devoted adherents.

SECTION IX.

THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE NOT FANATICAL.

THE mind seeks refreshment in contemplating Truth, after conversing long with the follies and crimes that mark, as well the religious, as the civil history of nations. A tranquil delight, a delight enhanced by contrast, is felt when we return to set foot upon that solid ground of reason and purity which the Scriptures open before us. How melancholy soever may be the spectacle of human affairs, a happier prospect is within our view.—In the religion of the Bible there is certainty—there is unsullied goodness—there is divinity! Let the inferences be what they may—and we should take care that they are sound, which we feel compelled to draw from the course of events, it remains always true that the writings of the prophets and apostles present a system of belief, an order of sentiments, and a rule of morals such as are altogether consistent with the highest conceptions we can form of the Divine attributes. The Bible is God's revelation: none doubt it who retain the integrity of the moral faculty; and who are informed of what has been, in every age, the actual condition of human nature.

The Scriptures are from Heaven. Yet we will not now assume this truth, but narrowly examine—on a single and peculiar line of argument, the proof of it.

Let it be premised that it is not by avoiding occasions of danger, but by efficiently providing against them, that the Scriptures lead man through the difficult paths of the spiritual world. The most critical positions which the human mind can occupy are freely entered upon by the writers of the Bible ;—all hazards are run, and a clear triumphant course is pursued through all. If an affirmation such as this be deemed declamatory, and more easily advanced than substantiated, let a strict attention be given to the facts and documents whence a conclusion should be drawn : in entering upon this ground no favour is employed, and no rigour of scrutiny is deprecated. We ask for what we may demand—a verdict according to the evidence.

On all questions relating to the alleged practical influence of opinions, the rational inquiry plainly is—Not what seems the tendency of single elements of the system ;—but in what manner are its various elements balanced and harmonized ? Who does not know that Effects are, in every case, whether physical or intellectual, as the *combined causes* which concur to produce them ? If at any time certain ingredients of religious truth have been drawn apart, and grossly abused, to the injury of the parties themselves, and to the scandal of others, the fault is not in the inspired Book. The sacred writers require nothing short of a submission to that complete and duly-adjusted system of motives which they promulgate ; and it would have been a virtual dere-

fiction of their authority to have made provision against the misuse of those *single principles* which can produce no mischief so long as they are held in combination.

Boldness—the boldness of simplicity, is the style of the Bible from first to last. Nowhere does it exhibit that sort of circumspection which distinguishes the purblind discretion of man. Man, if cautious at all, is overcautious; and he must be so, because he knows little of the remote relations of things, and almost nothing of their future consequences. Although one event only shall actually occur, in a given case, yet many that are possible must be provided for. But the Divine Omniscience saves itself all such conjectural provisions, and takes a direct course to its proposed end—an end it had foreseen from the beginning. A difference of the very same sort distinguishes human and divine operations, whenever brought into comparison; for while the former abound with precautions against possible accidents, in the latter, it is only actual evils that are precluded.

To take the separate ingredients of religion, as they may be gathered from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, one might find in them, *apart*, the incitements of those perverted sentiments which, in fact, through the course of ages, have borrowed a pretext from the Bible. No conceivable method of conveying moral principles could afford security against such a misuse of the heavenly boon; for if men will sever that which God has joined, nothing remains but that they should receive into their

bosoms the fruit of their temerity. The inspired writers, as may be proved in the most convincing manner, were themselves no fanatics; nor will their readers ever become such, while they admit that complement of motives which the theology of the Scriptures includes.

We have said that the Bible does not evade critical and delicate affirmations, as for example.—

Neither the Prophets nor the Apostles, in the representations they make of the Divine Nature, affect that theoretic style which pleases philosophy. On the contrary, they advance without solicitude into the very midst of the most appalling conceptions of the Supreme Majesty. And instead of affirming what they have to affirm with an accompaniment of extenuations, apologies, and cautions, they employ language, vigorous in the highest degree, leaving the whole force of their emphatic phrases to press, without relief, upon the imagination and consciences of men. Those very passages of terror which the Fanatic delights to rehearse, he may indeed find—if he will subtract them from their places; and when he enters into controversy with men of an opposite temperament, who will admit nothing into their theology but what is lenient, he easily triumphs over them, by adducing examples of a sort not to be reconciled with any such vague opinions. The Divine Being, as revealed to mankind by Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel; or by Christ himself, and Paul and James, is not the quiescent Power which Theists fondly paint. Rather is He terrible in his anger, jealous of his honour, and not to be approached without fear.

We find moreover, affirmed in the Holy Scriptures, that doctrine of the universal degeneracy of mankind, and of the consequent displacency of God, which waits only for exaggeration, to become what the fanatic demands, as the second capital excitement of his vindictive temper. The human race, he will say, is fallen—is foul—is guilty: may it not then—or ought it not to be *religiously hated*? Is not man spiritually abominable? Can any expressions of detestation—can any severities of treatment, be deemed excessive on the part of the few who, loyally taking side with God against the rebel race, would speak and act in a manner becoming the boldness of a true allegiance? Thus, and with some appearance of reason too, may the fanatic justify his gloomy mood.

To complete the apology which he might frame for the out-bursts of his arrogance, and for his factious proceedings, he will allege, that the entire history and economy of Revelation turns upon the principle of special favour granted to nations, to families, and to individuals, who have been honoured and benefited, notwithstanding enormous delinquencies. In fact, it is upon this very ground that fanatics of every age—Jewish, Mohammedan, and Christian, have taken their stand.

Picked passages may thus be made to furnish all that is wanted to warrant the rancour and presumption of the malign religionist. But how poorly will he defend himself when the great principles of biblical religion are duly brought together, and are made to bear in harmony upon the heart! The effect then is altogether of an opposite kind; so much so, that

even the enemies of the Gospel have been compelled to confess that the Bible is the fountain of compassion, the rule of benignity, and the very doctrine of meekness. That such is indeed the fact, may be sustained *first*, in the mode of a comprehensive statement of principles; and then in the method of a careful induction of specific instances. The importance of the subject will justify our pursuing, for a while, both these lines of proof.

We have then to make good, *first* on general grounds, the affirmation that the Religion of the Bible is not of fanatical tendency.

When the delusions of a depraved self-esteem are dispelled, so that moral and spiritual objects affect, as they ought, the conscience of a man, then, what before had acted as the excitement of spurious zeal, or as the occasion of malevolence, takes a salutary possession of the mind, and produces the mild fruits of piety and charity. Thus, for example, if the awful justice of God be truly understood as the necessary condition of that purity which is essential to the Divine Nature, and as a mode only of Sovereign Benevolence, then an inference from this truth comes home with weight upon the personal consciousness of guilt; and he who thus sees his own peril in the light of the divine justice, is thenceforth mainly occupied with those emotions of shame and fear, which are proper to him as a culprit. The wish to make a vindictive application of the same truth to others, although it be applicable, is forgotten, or becomes abhorrent to the soul. This surely is not a mere refinement, or an evasion of the difficulty.—

If the fearful retributive energy of the Divine Character be a truth, and a prime truth of Scripture, upon whom does it bear?—Upon all transgressors, without exception, and therefore upon each singly.—“But I am such,” says the now convicted man, “and to *me* God is terrible, inasmuch as He has the power and the determination to punish sin.” The entire current of ideas is in this manner turned, when once a belief of personal danger has been thoroughly awakened; and so it happens that the man who, yesterday, was hurling thunderbolts at his fellows, and exulting in the displays of divine displeasure, may now be seen prostrate, as in the dust, and unmindful of every thing but his own peril. Nothing more is needed to bring about so great a change, but that the Divine attributes should be understood in the relation they bear to our personal responsibility.

Pursuing the same path, we come to the second excitement of religious malevolence, as already enumerated; that is to say—The universal corruption of human nature, and the actual guilt of all men. But is it true that this pravity is of a spiritual kind, and does it affect the depth of the human heart? Then—a spiritual knowledge of the doctrine implies a vivid and expanded CONSCIOUSNESS of the fact, as the moral condition of the individual. To an enlightened conscience this personal knowledge of the evil bias of the heart, is nothing less than an interpretation, *viva voce*, of the Scripture doctrine of the corruption of human nature. Mankind at large is spiritually abominable in no other

sense than that in which—I am so; and a serious familiarity with the subject seldom fails to impart to each mind an *impression*, as if the corruption of the individual heart were more deep and deplorable than that of others.—If other men are objects of the divine displacency—I much more: such, whether in fact true or not, is the language of genuine contrition. But this introversion of feeling places the dogma altogether on another footing than it might before have occupied. Will there remain in a bosom that entertains these emotions of shame and compunction any residue of arrogance, or of malice towards the mass of mankind, because sharers in the same depravity? Surely not: on the contrary, a tender sympathy, a patient forbearance, and the liveliest zeal of benevolence are found to consist with the feeling of personal humiliation. The fanatic, with his misanthropy and his scorn, is quite shut out. He—infatuated man—knows nothing of himself, and therefore he has no indulgence for others. Let the doctrine of the corruption of human nature be expounded as it may, or even in some sense exaggerated, it will remain innoxious, so long as it thoroughly penetrates the soul that receives it; the principle becomes poisonous, only when thrown out and suffused.

The motives of genuine contrition seal the exclusion of arrogance from the heart of the penitent, even when a hope of the special favour of God is entertained with the utmost distinctness. If it be true, as the Scriptures affirm, that this favour towards individuals is absolutely free—if it comes irrespectively of original merit, and if the continu-

ance of the temper of humiliation is the fixed condition upon which a consciousness of it is granted to the believer, then nothing can be felt, in looking at home, but simple gratitude; and no emotion indulged, in looking abroad, but the desire that others should partake of boons of which all have equal need, and of which none can claim to be worthy.

The lurking notion on which the fanatic builds his self-gratulations, when he glances at the herd of men, is that they are, by the stern law of some intrinsic disqualification, for ever excluded from the hope of participating in the divine favour. His arrogance is of a patrician sort; and he would fain persuade himself that an eternal impossibility bars the access of others to the narrow ground he occupies. But the CHRISTIAN—taught from the Bible, learns a lesson the very reverse of this.—Commissioned and enjoined, as he is, to invite “ALL MEN, every where to repent and believe the Gospel,” exclusiveness of feeling is denied him; nor can he harbour that grudging of grace, which distinguishes the fanatic. Are the blessings of Christianity actually enjoyed only by few? Yes, alas, but the Christian—by plain inference from his principles, is taught to impute it to himself and his associates, as a fault that such is the fact. Far from thinking himself entitled to rest inertly upon the sunny spot of heavenly favour where he reclines, he knows himself to be bound to use every endeavour until all men obtain a share in his privilege. If, at a first glance, it might seem that the peculiarity of the Gospel gives sanction to fanatical presumption, we can no longer think so when we recollect the solemn

responsibility laid upon all Christians to propagate their faith by the mild methods of instruction. How is it possible for a man selfishly to condemn others on account of a privilege which he holds on the express condition of imparting it to all around him? No one surely can be diligently scattering a benefit, and—at the same moment, exulting in his exclusive possession of it.

The scheme of religious sentiment contained in the Scriptures, wants then only to be received, such as it is, without deduction, and without addition, and to be received as the object of personal feeling, and it then becomes altogether benign in its influence. Experience might be appealed to in proof of this assertion; but our present purpose demands that we turn to the Inspired Writings, and examine, in a number of instances, the character and tendency of the sentiments they recommend. We have also to ascertain, if it can be done, what were the personal dispositions of the writers; and to see whether those who promulgated this religion were themselves free from the malign temper of the Fanatic.

Peculiar considerations enhance the importance of the inquiry we have in hand. The fact is not to be denied, that the Jewish people, from the period when their affairs find a place on the page of general history, exhibit an extraordinary instance of national religious rancour, and stand forth almost as THE FANATICS by eminence of the ancient world. It becomes then a question, by no means frivolous—When did this malign temper first make its appearance; and whence did it derive its motives, and its aggravations? Fairly to deal with such a question,

we should of course look to the religious institutes of the people, as contained in their sacred writings; as well as examine the facts and circumstances of their subsequent history. The latter we have already briefly considered; the former is now our purpose.

Nothing is gained in behalf of religion by attempting to screen the Inspired Books from the scrutiny to which, as *historical documents* merely, they may be liable. If the pious frauds that once were accounted praiseworthy, are to be shunned and spoken of with detestation; so, doubtless, should we avoid and renounce all those indirect procedures in matters of argument, which partake of the same spirit. Whoever is so happy as to possess an intelligent conviction of the divine origin of the Bible, feels himself free from that anxiety which has its source in ignorance and infirmity of judgment.

We have remarked that the influence of a system is not to be judged of by the single elements it may contain; but by that balance of motives for which it provides. Let then this equitable principle be borne in mind while we take a survey of the Jewish institutions—so far as they relate to our subject, and of the revelations that were, in the course of ages, grafted upon the Mosaic economy.

The first peculiarity of the Hebrew polity, civil and sacred, was—it need hardly be said, the seclusion of the race from the great community of mankind. Now it is certain that a privileged seclusion, and especially a sacred one, tends, on the ordinary prin-

ciples of human nature, to beget unsocial and fanatical sentiments. This general truth might be admitted, even in its fullest extent, and yet room would be left to allege, that an incidental evil of this sort was well compensated by the momentous purpose of which that separation was the necessary means ;—the purpose being nothing less than the preservation in the world of the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and the maintenance of a pure moral code, as the law of an entire people. But we leave untouched any such ground of apology, and prefer to ask—In what style or terms was the seclusion of the Hebrew race effected? The answer must be, that it was brought about in a mode so mortifying to the common emotions of national pride, that the endurance of it on the part of a rude and factious people is no slender proof that the Legislator, in the first instance, and after him the Prophets, were sustained in the exercise of their authority by miraculous powers. Nothing can be imagined more opposed to the usual practice and policy of the founders of nations, or more unlike the style of patriotic bards, than is the language incessantly repeated by Moses, and by the inspired teachers, as they succeed each other through the course of ages. One is actually tempted to suppose that he and they aimed at nothing so much as to ascertain the extreme limit of their power over the popular mind, by outraging, to the utmost, its self-love and vanity!

Whatever momentary objurgations might have had place between the Hebrew leader and the refractory tribes that followed him into the desert, or whatever terms of reproach might have been used

by him on particular occasions, it did not seem necessary that such expressions of indignation—almost of scorn, which the provocation of the time called forth, should be recorded, or that they should be mingled inseparably with the national code and history, and so be handed down to posterity. Unless a very peculiar object had been in view, what Legislator, guided by common sense, would have so enhanced the probability that his code should soon be consigned to oblivion, as is done by the insertion on almost every page throughout his Institutes, of the most disparaging epithets, and the most humiliating narrations?—Surely a higher wisdom than that of the human legislator is here apparent;—or else, there is *less* wisdom than the most simple of mankind are gifted with. Are we not compelled to confess, if the case be attentively considered, that a special provision is made in the Pentateuch for counteracting that national arrogance which the favoured seclusion of the people was of itself likely to engender? This same code of sacred privilege, and of separation from the bulk of mankind, which the priests were enjoined perpetually to rehearse in the ears of the people—this Law, which was not only to be cherished in the heart, but to be “taught diligently unto children—to be talked of in the house, and in the way—in lying down, and in rising up; which was to be bound as a sign upon the hand, and as frontlets between the eyes, which was to be inscribed upon the door-posts and upon the gates of the city:”^{*}—this law, so reiterated, and so forced upon the memory, carried with it the most pointed rebukes of the national

^{*} Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8; and xi. 18.

vanity. It was one thing for Moses to have pun-
gently upbraided a contumacious populace in mo-
ments of sedition; and quite another for him to
consign these same reproaches to perpetuity, by
weaving them into the people's history, and by
wedging them in between his statutes! Yet so we
find them in scores of places.—“Ye are a stiff-necked
people, an evil nation;—I will come up into the
midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; there-
fore now put off thine ornaments from thee, that I
may know what to do unto thee.”*

A most explicit caution against the indulgence of
national pride is given by the Leader of the Hebrew
tribes when, on the very borders of the promised
land, he announced to the people the terrible part
they were to act as executioners of the divine dis-
pleasure upon the corrupted occupants of the soil.—
Can we read it without admiration of the courage of
Moses;—or without conviction of his divine legation?
“Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord
thy God hath cast out the nations from before thee,
saying—For my righteousness the Lord hath brought
me in to possess this land. But for the wickedness
of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from
before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the
uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess
their land.—Understand therefore, that the Lord
thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it
for thy righteousness; *for thou art a stiff-necked
people*. Remember, and forget not, how thou pro-
vokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilder-
ness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the

* Exod. xxxiii. 5.

land of Egypt, until ye came into this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord.—Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.”*

Or if it had been the intention of their Leader indirectly, yet effectually to allay the youthful exultation of the people, just bursting as they were upon the stage of political existence, and just setting foot upon the career of conquest, nothing could have been done, or thought of, more conducive to such a purpose, than the uttering that tremendous comminative prediction of the ultimate miseries of the nation, with which he takes his leave of them. On any ordinary principles it might justly have been supposed that those prophetic curses, upon which history has made so long and sad a comment, would have operated, either to break the heart of the people, or to have utterly disaffected their minds toward a religious system that entailed penalties so dreadful :—and the more so, when a confident announcement of the actual issue was subjoined to the exhibition of blessings and curses.—“I call heaven and earth to record against you.—For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you ; and evil will befall you in the latter days.”†

In terms then, such as these, was it that the seclusion and the sacred privileges of the race were, in the first instance, sanctioned ! And the tone set by Moses was chimed-in with by each of the seers and poets in the long succession of ages. The bud-dings of religious national insolence we find to be

* Deut. ix. 4—7, 24.

† Deut. xxxi. 27—29.

nipped at once, and with a stern severity, by each divinely-commissioned personage, as he comes on the stage of sacred history. Reproof, reproach, if not contempt, is the characteristic of the Jewish canonical writings. Nor is so much as one passage to be found there, the tendency of which is to cherish the feeling that might naturally have sprung from a conscious enjoyment of prerogatives and honours conferred upon the nation by the Sovereign of the Universe. Joshua, captain and conqueror, like Moses the legislator, surrenders his charge and dies, with language on his lips of discouragement and mistrust.*

A remarkable instance of the care taken to damp the arrogance of the people is found in the form of thanksgiving that was put into the mouth of the Israelite, when summoned to offer the first-fruits of the year to the Lord. "And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days," with the basket of fruits in thy hand, "and thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God—A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous."† This profession, including as it does the elements of piety and benevolence, might with much effect be placed by the side of the festal liturgies of other nations, wherein the exorbitant absurdities of national vanity have usually been indulged without restraint.

But to that venerable book of sacred odes and public anthems, of which the founder of the Israelitish monarchy was the chief author, we ought

* Josh. xxiv. 15—27.

† Deut. xxvi. 4—10.

naturally to look for the evidence we are in search of.—Was, then, that spiritual superciliousness which religious privilege is wont to engender, cherished, or was it repressed—was it authenticated, or was it mortified, by the divinely-sanctioned poetry of the Hebrew people, and by the choruses of the Temple? First let the peculiar circumstances of the people and of their prince at the juncture when the Psalms came into general use, be considered. After four centuries of political disquiet—centuries of long depression, and of transient triumph, and just after the failure of the people's first essay at royalty, the nation had rallied, and had mustered its spirits, and become invasive, and had imposed fear in turn upon all its neighbours, trampling on the necks of its ancient oppressors; and it was now fast coming into quiet possession of the advantages of its soil and position:—the Hebrew people was rising from the dust, and putting on the attire of the bridegroom, and was soon to abash its rivals by the splendour, as well as by the strength of national prosperity. And all this dazzling advancement was taking place under the hand of an obscurely-born captain, whose unstable power demanded the support of every available means of popularity.

At the same moment the primitive worship, as enjoined to the people by Moses, was restored and settled, and its services expanded and adorned. This then, assuredly, was the season in which the politic founder of a monarchy would endeavour to exalt, to the highest pitch, the national enthusiasm, and would labour to exacerbate all well-founded pretensions; while he endeavoured to throw into the

shade, or utterly to blot out, if possible, the anciently recorded disgraces of the nation. Shall we not find him avoiding, as by instinct, the obsolete themes of the people's dishonour? His discretion surely will impel him—king and poet as he is, to strike another wire. It is quite otherwise, for this man of uncertain fortune, this nursling of the sheepfold and the desert, employs the powers of song for purposes of an opposite kind! David wielded those two sceptres, of which, in the instance of an unsophisticated people, the one often proves as potent as the other.—The warrior-king, is also Seer and Bard; and it is he who gives forth the sacred anthems of public worship! Rare conjunction of talents and powers! how shall such means be employed, so as most effectually to enhance the proud patriotism of the people—to blend that patriotism with the influence of religion, and, not least, to shed the delusive splendour of poetry and fable over the early history of the race? On all grounds of ordinary calculation, and on every known principle of human nature, and according to the uniform tenor of history, we should expect nothing less in the Psalms of David than mythic exaggerations, mixed up with the stirring elements of sacred and civil fanaticism. But are these compositions of any such sort? Nothing can be more widely opposed to the anticipations we might have formed; for these sacred odes and solemn anthems subserve no purpose of kingly policy, and can be explained only when we adopt the belief which a single apostolic phrase condensely expresses—that David “spake by the Holy Ghost.”

Before we turn to particular passages, it is perti-

nent to notice the general spirit of the poems attributed to David. It must be confessed then that an air of sadness pervades them. They abound with prayers under pressure of calamity; and are thick set with the sighs and tears of a heavy heart. Nothing indicates that the royal lyre was thought of as an instrument of ambition:—the exploits and triumphs of the young hero, though chaunted by the damsels of Zion, are not made the themes of his own song. Let it be alleged that they were composed in the early years of his exile, and under privation; yet they were not afterwards supplanted by verse more befitting the glories of kingly state.

The fifteenth, which is the first of these compositions that seems intended for public worship, is severely didactic, and comes to its close without a single note of joy. That noble ode (the 18th) which, more than any other, is exultant, being the one that signalizes the final triumph of David over his domestic foes, is remarkable for those often-repeated phrases that attribute the entire success of his course to divine interposition:—if it be a conqueror that speaks in these metres, he is such because he was the instrument of power from on high. Nor is the pride of the nation, any more than that of prince, flattered, in this psalm. The same spirit reappears on each similar occasion:—it is piety, not pride, that inspires the song of gratulation. As thus—“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.” The 24th psalm, like the 15th, is manifestly a triumphant anthem, to which all the powers of music should give effect, when the congregated people met

on the hill of Zion. First mindful of the great principles of practical virtue, apart from which all worship is mockery, it swells into the loftiest strain of celestial rapture.—But who is the hero—and what is the subject?—not David;—it is not he whose approach is announced as “the glorious King,” and whose entrance upon the precincts of worship is to be proclaimed by blast of trumpets. But “The Lord of hosts—HE is the King of glory!” Judged of by the severest rules of criticism, can there be detected in this impassioned anthem even so much as a stain of royal vanity, or of national arrogance? Or to bring the question close home to our subject, does it appear that, to foment the fanaticism of this secluded people was the ruling intention of its sacred poetry? We appeal for an answer to those who have read history, and are not ignorant of human nature.

The care of morals, and a prompt jealousy for the Divine honour, meet us wherever we might most expect—on natural principles, to find excitements of another sort. Let the reader pursue this scrutiny, and adduce, if they exist, any contrary instances; especially let him look to such of these odes as have a prophetic aspect;—for the future, even more than the past, is apt to inflame the imagination; or to those which seem designed for public worship—the worship of an assembled nation. The historical odes are not less remarkably abstinent of flattery to the popular feeling, and indeed must be deemed altogether unparalleled instances of national poetic records, inasmuch as the spirit of each of them is penitential, rather than exultant. Such is the recapitulation of

the Mosaic story in the 78th Psalm.—What were the things that had been “heard and known,” and which “the fathers had told” to the sons? not marvellous tales of prowess, and the conquest of monsters and titans;—but the rebellions of the people’s ancestors, and the patience of their God. And this same recapitulation was enjoined as a “statute for ever,” that each generation, as it rose up, might learn to “set their hope in God, and not forget his works; but keep his commandments; and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation—a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.” We should mark the close of this mortifying recital, which ends in the establishment of the throne of David, who was “taken from the sheepfolds, and from following the ewes great with young!” A climax this, which, though quite in harmony with the spirit of the poem, and of the collection, certainly does not betray much, either of royal arrogance, or of fabulous exaggeration.

The same themes, treated in nearly the same spirit, present themselves in the three consecutive odes (105, 6, 7; and also in the 135th); which last beautifully teaches the doctrine of divine providence, in the best of all methods, that of historical inference. To exalt Jehovah, to humble the people as *a race* that had never gratefully received, or duly improved its extraordinary privileges, is the purport of the whole; and in reading them it is impossible that a candid mind should charge the fault upon the ancient *literature*, any more than upon the primitive *institutions* of the Jewish people, if, in a subsequent age,

the descendants of Abraham are found to have been distinguished by religious and national arrogance. That the highly important prerogatives of the race, as the chosen people of God, should be spoken of, and rejoiced in, is only what piety and gratitude demand.—“The Lord sheweth his word unto Jacob ; his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.—He hath not dealt so with any nation ; and as for his judgments, they have not known them.”* This was nothing more than simple fact ; but the statement of it is mixed with none of that scorn which betrays a fanatical temper, and which belonged to the Jew of a later era !

But did the prophets of after ages work upon that easily-excited feeling of spiritual vanity and rancour which, at the period of the Roman supremacy, and afterwards, characterised the Jewish people ? To answer this question we must cast the eye over the line of the prophetic ministry, from the age of HOSEA, to that of MALACHI, embracing a disturbed period of four hundred years. Every reader of the sacred documents knows that the impression which, as a mass, they make upon the mind, is that of a long lamentation, and a perpetual reproof. The function of the Hebrew prophet, of every era, if we were required to describe it in a single term, must be called an office of upbraiding. These venerable writings are immensely remote from that colour of exaggeration and flattery which belongs to the rhapsodies of the Bard among passionate and rude nations. The virulence of Jewish pride, it is certain, had not its

* Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.

source in the pages of the prophets, any more than in the odes of David. But we are to adduce passages.

“I have hewed them by the prophets;—I have slain them by the words of my mouth.”*—Descriptive metaphor! not only proper to the past, but truly anticipative of what was to be the general strain of the prophetic message in succeeding ages. The goodness of both branches of the Hebrew stock, was, we are told by Hosea, “like a morning cloud, and as the early dew;” and of both nations this ancient seer declares, that, “they had forgotten their Maker, and were like a deceitful bow.—Israel is an empty vine:”—“he has deeply corrupted himself.”†—Both Israel and Judah are invited to return to their God; yet with hearty humiliations; nor in a sentence of this venerable composition can we detect an indication of the existence, at that time, of the spiritual presumption which afterwards marked the temper of the people; much less is any such spirit favoured by the prophet: on the contrary, a tone of disparagement distinguishes the prophecy.

A remarkable rebuke of that malign complacency in the execution of Divine wrath which is too often admitted by gloomy minds, meets us in the book of JONAH.—“Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city!”‡—Such is the style of the compassion of Heaven, and how unlike the petulance of the seer, who would rather have stood by, to witness the instant destruction of an entire people, than that his own denunciations should seem to be falsified! If at any time we find even in an inspired person, a

* Hosea vi. 5. † Hosea vi. 4. viii. 14. x. 1. ‡ Jonah iv. 11.

false sentiment—that sentiment is at once condemned and disowned;—so true is it that the Hebrew Scriptures, far from being of fanatical tendency, counteract every feeling of that order.

We descend the stream of time, yet do not descry, on either bank of the current, that noxious growth of religious pride which we are now in search of. We meet however with pertinent proofs of the truth of our general doctrine—That the Jewish people, though favoured and sequestered, and taught to think themselves advantaged beyond any other nation, was so dealt with on the part of the prophets as to divert, at its very spring, the risings of spiritual presumption. Let us hear on this point the eloquent herdsman of Tekoa. “Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel; against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, **YOU ONLY HAVE I KNOWN OF ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH; THEREFORE I WILL PUNISH YOU FOR ALL YOUR INIQUITIES.**”^{*} Pungent admixture this, of the counteractive elements of religious feeling! as if the distinctions of the race were to be kept in mind, only as a ground of dread and shame. If this single passage had been duly borne in mind by the zealots of the age of Vespasian, the fate of the people would have been other than it was. Each portion of the same prophecy mingles rebukes and promises with a stern enforcement of the principles of justice and mercy; and as we read, we are compelled to confess that the Seer was not one who, by whispering soft things in the ear of the great and the rich, made his

^{*} Amos iii. 1, 2.

way from rustic obscurity to fortune.—“Your treading is on the poor:—ye take from him burdens of wheat; therefore (though) ye have built houses of hewn stone, ye shall not live in them:—I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins.—They afflict the just; they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate.”*—Nor, on the other hand, did the prophet flatter the mass of the people by cherishing their religious insolence; for example—“I hate—I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.—Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.—But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream!”†

One of the most animated of all the prophetic descriptions of the future glory and prosperity of the descendants of Abraham, forms the sequel of an announcement of wrath immediately near. “Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand; and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come:” and these two members of the prediction are made to hinge upon the fact of national repentance. “Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.”‡ A national hope, not so enveloped in a caution or a reproof, is scarcely found on the sacred page.

ISAIAH, the prophet who more clearly than any other, saw the bright futurity of his people’s glory, and who more distinctly than any other spoke of the Great Deliverer, observes invariably the rule his predecessors had adhered to—namely, of holding a

* Amos v. 11, 12. † Amos v. 23, 24. ‡ Joel i. 15. ii. 18.

tight check upon the emotions of national pride. This is the theme to which not merely he recurs on particular occasions, but which he places foremost, as if it were to be the text of his prophetic ministry. Mortifying exordium, truly, of his message to a nation favoured of God! "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken:—I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!—The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.—Ah, sinful nation;—a people laden with iniquity;—why should ye be stricken any more!—Ye will revolt more and more:—the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint!"* To dash to the ground the haughtiness of spurious piety is the very first business of the prophet.—"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth.—They are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them."†

Does it appear then that Jewish fanaticism drew its authority from the prophets? Or we might ask—Do the prophets—in that style of which church history and later religious literature furnish ten thousand examples—*Do they exalt the importance of religious services and ceremonies, to the disparagement of morals?* Fanaticism, as we well know, takes its rise in the hot-bed of this very corruption. Is this then the fault that attaches to the

* Isai. i. 2—5.

† Isai. i. 13.

canonical writings of the Jews? Let the passage quoted just above, in which indignant reprobation is cast upon even the divinely appointed services of the national religion, when deformed as they were at that time by hypocrisy, be read in connexion with the verses that immediately follow :—"Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes : cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment ; relieve the oppressed ; judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow."* These vigorous expressions seem intended to burn and scorch the very germs of spiritual pride, hypocrisy, and hatred out of the Jewish mind !—Certainly our conclusion gathers strength—That the Hebrew Scriptures are not fanatical.

But inasmuch as it may have appeared, while traversing the ground we have lately passed over, as if every variety of fanaticism found its example among the extravagances exhibited by the Jewish people of a later age, and as if the fanaticism of Papal Christianity, and of Mohammedism too, were but another fashion of that which had its parentage with the Jew, it becomes especially necessary to demonstrate that this bad spirit did not draw its origin from the early and authentic books of that people ; but, on the contrary, received from them every imaginable check.

Already, even in the age of Isaiah, the people, though not yet fanatics, had learned, it seems, to court delusion, and to bend their ear to religious flatteries. They "said to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things :

* Isai. i. 16.

speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”*
 Yet this infatuated preference of lying oracles to the true, was not only rebuked at the moment, but the existence of so grievous a folly, in a people more highly favoured than any other, was to be recorded, and handed down as a warning to all future times. “Now go ; write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, for ever and ever—That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.”† And we should observe, that if the vehement rebuke itself be remarkable, the transmission and preservation of it by the very parties against whom it was launched, as a perpetual reproach—a reproach that was to vex the ear of each successive generation “for ever,” is a still more striking fact. Why was not a passage, such as the above, silently dropped from the text by the scribes of a later age?—Why, but because within the circle of Jewish history, nothing happens in mere conformity with the ordinary impulses of human nature; but every thing indicates the immediate presence of a controlling power “not of men.”

The latter and more consolatory portions of Isaiah’s prophecy are, on another account, as remarkable as the earlier, and the more stern portion. In these, no one can fail to notice the care with which the stirring hopes of the Israelitish people are severed from emotions of arrogance, and are connected with the spirit of humiliation, and with the remembrance of past offences. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—Speak ye com-

* Isai. xxx. 10.

† Isai. xxx. 8.

fortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—"I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."* That frequent theme—the singular obduracy of the national character, comes up wherever promises of restoration and triumph are to be afforded. "I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck an iron sinew, and thy brow brass :"—"thou wast called a transgressor from the womb."—"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea !"†

It would be superfluous to refer the diligent reader of the Bible to the many passages in this prophet which are pertinent to our present argument. If there are any who, while indulging unfavourable impressions of the religion of the Scriptures, have never bestowed serious attention upon the evidence whence alone a rational opinion can be drawn, and if this note should meet the eye of any such person, the author recommends him, after informing himself competently of the moral and religious condition of the European and Asiatic nations in the Homeric and succeeding age, and after dismissing from the mind every modern association of ideas, to read the prophecy of Isaiah, and to note, as he goes along, whatever bears upon the following points, namely :—

1. The unity, majesty, creative power, providential sway, justice, and placability of God.

2. The chief articles of morality—justice, tem-

* Isai. xi. 1, 2.

† Isai. xlvi. 7 13.

perance, mercy, and kindness toward the weak and oppressed.

3. The demerits and disgraces of the Jewish people; and the grounds of the favour nevertheless shewn them by God.

4. The anticipations and promises which relate to the world at large, and to an era of universal peace.

5. The negative, but important merit which belongs to this writer, of abstaining from all ascetic, superstitious, or extravagant religious excitements.

Let it then be inquired if a book, having such distinctions, and produced when and where it was, does not proclaim its own divinity.

The task of the prophets, as we have observed, was that almost always, of reproof and denunciation. But according to the principles of human nature, this is a part which, when it comes to be the chief business of a man's life, tends strongly to overcloud his spirit, and to embitter his temper; the more so when he has to deal with great affairs, and with men of high station—when he has to denounce national delinquencies—to arraign the noble, and to challenge even kings to answer for their faults! Let any one imagine himself to have received a commission of this sort, and that it were his office to chastise his country, and its rulers, year after year, with the fiery scourge of his lips.—What probably would be his temper—what the tone of his arrogance—what his self-sufficiency, and what that rancour which the contumacy of the common people, on the one hand, and the persecutions of the great on the other, would, after a while, impart to his soul? Scarcely any instance like this, can be found within the

range of modern history that does not declare the extreme difficulty of avoiding fanatical virulence, when the office of public reprover has to be discharged. Yet it was precisely in a position of this kind, that the melancholic priest of Anathoth, JEREMIAH, stood, and stood alone, during the lapse of forty dismal years. Isaiah, his predecessor, had seen the evil afar off;—but Jeremiah actually waded through the troubled waters of national corruption, and desolation. Tumult, contumacy, injurious treatment, public ruin, and personal distresses, followed him from the commencement to the close of his career. Even if there be no room to expect, in the pages of one like Jeremiah, the indications of a wish to flatter the spiritual pride of the people, may we not confidently look there for the symptoms of that PERSONAL FANATICISM—that malign acerbity, which ordinarily belongs to the character of a public accuser?

Any such anticipation, natural as it may be, is falsified; for if there be any one portion of the Hebrew Scriptures that peculiarly breathes a tender and plaintive spirit, it is the prophecy of Jeremiah. In reading it we see and hear the man of grief bewailing the miseries of his country, as well as his own misfortunes. “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”* This is not the mood of the murky fanatic, who seeks to avenge the slights he has personally received from his countrymen, by exulting over public calamities. At the moment when mur-

* Jer. ix. 1.

derously set upon by the men of his native town, the prophet passionately appeals to the divine protection,* and receives a message of wrath for his persecutors; but plainly he is not to be deemed vindictive in so doing, until the reality of his commission has been disproved. No asperity of temper made the work of threatening agreeable to him. Witness his exclamation—"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention, to the whole earth!"† That his disposition was timid and mistrustful, much more than pugnacious, is evident; and, as is quite natural to such a temper, when encircled by formidable adversaries, he eagerly implores that aid from heaven, whence alone he could hope for deliverance. But it is otherwise with the fanatic, who, in moments of excitement and danger, shews the greater daring; nor will he even affect to say—"I have not desired the woful day—O Lord thou knowest:—that which came out of my lips was right before thee.—Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil."‡ We can rely upon no indications of character, if we may not discriminate between the vehement strivings of an oppressed and tender spirit, and the virulent moodiness of the religious misanthrope.—The one bewails its own misfortunes as thus—"Wherefore came I forth of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame:"§—the other ruminates revenge, and cheers himself in the prospect of it.

There is found a courage, the fruit of virtue, in

* Jer. xi. 20.

† Jer. xv. 10.

‡ Jer. xvii. 16.

§ Jer. xx. 18.

instances where the native courage of temperament is quite wanting. A firmness of the former sort was displayed by the prophet when at length, after many menaces from the rulers, he was arraigned as a traitor, and stood in immediate peril of death.* The constancy he displays on this occasion brings together meekness and resolution in their genuine combination.—“As for me, behold I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you, to speak all these words in your ears.”

But if we wanted a searching test, by means of which to determine the question of a man's temper, we might well find it in such a particular as this—namely, that while a self-commissioned and fanatical reprover holds back whatever might seem emollient or consolatory, and is really unable to strike any chord that is not harsh—the true messenger of heaven, on the contrary, shews whence he has received his instructions by frequently reverting, and with a natural ease, to bright hopes and mild persuasives. Now this characteristic especially belongs to Jeremiah. The instances are numerous in which, even with the heaviest denunciations on his lips, he mingles the most cheering predictions, and the tenderest advices. “Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel, for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity. And Jacob

* Jer. xxvi. 10.

shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.”—“And out of (his ruined palaces) shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry.”*

To announce wrath, which makes the *burden* of the servant of the Lord, is the spontaneous task of the fanatic; and because it is the task he has chosen, he refuses to take up any other theme. On this principle we do not hesitate to conclude that the Jewish prophets, though from age to age the messengers of divine displeasure, were incited by no malignant impulse: and the criterion is—that not one of them, even the most lugubrious, fails to brighten his scroll of woe with frequent words of mercy, and many sparkles of distant hope.

EZEKIEL, like Jeremiah, and his predecessors, opens his ministry with the language of disparagement towards the people to whom he is sent:—it was “a rebellious nation;—they and their fathers;—impudent children, and stiff-hearted;—they are a rebellious house.”† Before this contumacious people was the prophet enjoined to spread “a roll of a book, written within and without with lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” But if such be the pervading colour of Ezekiel’s prophecy, as of others, this, like others, recommends itself as indeed a divine message, by its firm, and very copious assertion of the great principles of virtue and piety. The prophet’s forehead was “made as adamant, and harder than flint,” to oppose the impudent rebellion of the people; but it was still “to warn the wicked to turn from his wickedness and live.” And we find too, here, the

* Jer. xlv. 27, 28.

† Ezek. ii. 3, 4, 10.

same frequent admixture of gracious promises, and bright anticipations, with heavier matters. "I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered; and I will give you the land of Israel. And I will give you one heart; and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh, that ye may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people; and I will be their God."* This is encouragement without flattery; and hope, bursting through the black clouds of divine indignation.

We find in Ezekiel† significant allusions to the existence, in his time, of sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy—the vices that distinguish the mature age of a national religion; but yet there are no indications of the rise of that peculiar temper which, a few centuries later, became characteristic of the race. Nor indeed does any evidence present itself which might so be understood, until some time after the closing of the sacred canon. Had the spirit of fanaticism actually come abroad among the Jewish people in the age we are now speaking of, some indirect proof of the fact would infallibly have made itself apparent in those various writings that contain, or refer to, the national sentiments, during, and after the captivity.—It was in Babylon, vexed, afflicted, humiliated, and yet conscious of a dignity far superior to what could be boasted by the lordly oppressor, that the Jew would naturally—if it had indeed

* Ezek. xi. 16—20, and xxxvi. 20, to the end.

† Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

become his mood, have given vent to the rankling pride of his bosom. Or it was while toiling, sword in hand, amid the ruins of the holy city—beset by jealous foes, scorned, dependent for protection upon an idolatrous government, and now thoroughly disenchanted of the ancient polytheistic propensity—it was then, and under circumstances of such extraordinary excitement, that the sons of Abraham—the friend of God, might be expected to swell and pant with the gloomy arrogance of spiritual conceit. Yet we do not find that such was the fact. The strong corrective influence of the sacred writings, as well as of the extant prophetic function, still held, it seems, the fanatical tendency effectually in check.

Fairly considered, in this point of view, the solemn confession of national disgraces and delinquencies, uttered by DANIEL, while the heavy foot of the Median king was yet on the neck of the people, ought to be taken as presumptive evidence that no rancorous national fanaticism—the usual product of grievous sufferings in minds conscious of religious nobility, had *then* sprung up, nor belonged to the Jew of the Captivity. Proof of the same kind, in part negative, in part positive, may be drawn from the manner and spirit of the prophets who closed the sacred canon. HAGGAI, for example, reproves, humiliates, and encourages the people; but neither does he himself excite, nor does he even allude to the existence of that peculiar temper, the origin of which we are in quest of: the virulence of national religious malignancy is not as yet discoverable. ZECHARIAH is consolatory, and labours to exhilarate the people; nevertheless he sternly insists

on the great matters of justice and mercy.—“Execute true judgment,” says he, “and shew mercy and compassions, every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.”* This prophet then, was no fanatic; for it is the characteristic of such to condemn the simple truths of morality, while religious pretensions are exaggerated. Nor does it appear that the Jews of his time were fanatical; for although grievous faults, of almost every kind, are charged upon them, no allusion whatever is made, suggesting the belief that this one had then shewed itself.

EZRA and NEHEMIAH—priest and prince, stand on the page of history as noble examples of national constancy, and of zeal for a religious institute, without taint of fanatical virulence. Their conduct and their expressions are becoming to men who, being accountable to a jealous foreign power, and spitefully watched and hemmed in by the hordes that ravaged the country, had to discharge the difficult part of restoring a long desolated land, of reinstating a fallen polity, and of correcting inveterate abuses. So far as we may safely gather evidence from materials so brief and scanty, these two Chiefs might, if brought into comparison with any who have been placed in similar circumstances, challenge the highest praise for patriotism, courage, and moderation. Ezra and Nehemiah would have been heroes in the world’s esteem—if they had not been BIBLE heroes. We should not neglect to take

* Zech. vii. 9, 10. viii. 16, 17.

into our account the eloquent historical confession, uttered in face of the assembled people by their leaders, after a public reading of the Law.* The introductory phrase is especially pertinent to our subject.—“And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers” (not haughtily to exult in their distinctions, nor to recount the early glories of their now fallen state, but) “to CONFESS THEIR SINS, AND THE INIQUITIES OF THEIR FATHERS.” No single excitement of fanaticism—no trace of it, is to be found in these closing memorials of canonical Jewish history.

In the hasty, yet not incautious, review we have taken of the Hebrew Scriptures, we have assumed nothing in their behalf; but have judged of them precisely as we should of the ancient literature of any other people. The result of our scrutiny is a double conclusion, *first* that these writings do not encourage the temper which the consciousness of religious privileges so often engenders; but rather, and in a very remarkable manner, bear with all their stress against such emotions; and *secondly*, that while they afford abundant evidence—evidence given without reserve, of the prevalence of every immorality among the people, no indication is contained in them of the existence of that national fanaticism which, in the Roman age, raged in Judea so vehemently.

But there yet remains a point or two that must be noticed.—It has appeared that the arrogance of the Jewish people was not fomented, but repressed by Moses, and by the poets and prophets of succeeding

* Neh. ix.

times.—This however is a half only of the evidence that bears upon our argument ; for it can be proved that a kindly sentiment *towards the human family at large* was pointedly enjoined by the same authorities. SEPARATION, it is true, was the fundamental principle of the Jewish polity ;—but then it was separation on the ground *only* of those corruptions and enormities that prevailed in the surrounding countries. The sole intention of the national seclusion was to preserve in the world the prime elements of morals and religion. And to secure this intention, and to secure it in the actual condition of mankind at the time, an extraordinary line of policy, in particular cases, as well as unique institutions—civil and religious, were indispensable. This race of true worshippers, planted, as it was, on the confines of mighty and splendid idolatries, must need assume a front of defiance and of universal reprobation. But then this reprobation had regard to *nothing* but the errors and the vices of idolatry ; consequently it was always true that, whoever among the nations, afar off or near, would renounce his delusions, and “cleave unto the God of Israel,” was welcomed to the bosom of the state. Thus the light of genuine religion was diffused, as much as conserved, by the Mosaic institutions ; and explicit provision was made for the unlimited extension of the benefits they conferred.

During the purer age of the Israelitish state it is manifest that the propagation of true religion was an object of the fond desires and prayers of the pious.—The people was instructed to connect their own prosperity with the welfare of the world.

Little as we may have heeded the fact, it is certain that expressions of an expansive philanthropy constantly echoed in the anthems of the Jewish temple worship! The passages challenge attention.—“God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us.—That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.—Let the people (the nations) praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let THE NATIONS BE GLAD AND SING FOR JOY; for thou shalt judge (preside over) the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, EVEN OUR OWN GOD, shall bless us:—God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”* Noble utterance this, of piety and universal goodwill! and how unlike to that grudging temper which had taken so firm a hold of the Jewish mind in the time of its reprobation.

While fixing the eye upon the heights of the southern Syria in the age of Titus, who must not be amazed at the singular spectacle of a petty tribe, having its face sternly set against all nations, so as to be styled—“haters of mankind.” And yet—so marvellous are the revolutions of national character, this same region, and its sacred capital, a few centuries before, was the only spot on all the globe—as far as history informs us, where public worship ennobled itself by the language of universal goodwill to man!

Never is it found that fanaticism indulges bright

* Psalm lxxvii.

hopes in favour of the bulk of mankind—Certainly it is not fanaticism that says—“All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name.”* It is not fanaticism that, in the moment of national exultation, challenges all men to partake with itself its choicest honours. Yet such was actually the style of the songs that resounded, sabbath after sabbath, from the consecrated palaces of Zion! “O sing unto the Lord a new song ;—sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.—Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Bring an offering and COME INTO HIS COURTS. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Jerusalem) fear before him all the earth.”† We ask now, Is it fair to say that the pristine religion of the Jews was dark, churlish, or misanthropic? “O praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise him, all ye people.”‡ Such was that Judaism—as God made it, of which the Gospel gave only a new interpretation! But the degraded Jew of the era of the Gospel had so perverted the faith of his ancestors, that, when Christianity came in at length to give effect to the devout desires of the ancient church, he gnawed his tongue in very spite.—Let us then attribute the later bad spirit strictly to the men in whom it is found ; and do justice, as well to the primitive doctrine of this extraordinary people, as to the brighter system which sprung out of it.

Not only did several explicit enactments secure

* Psalm lxxxvi. 9.

† Psalm xvi.

‡ Psalm cxvii.

permission to aliens to take their part in the sacred Mosaic rites—even the most peculiar of them ; but innumerable passages of the Pentateuch and of the Prophets, assert, very solemnly, the rights of the *stranger* and protect his welfare, along always with the widow and the fatherless.—“THE STRANGER, the widow, and the fatherless,” were to be cared for and cherished, as an indispensable condition of the Divine favour to the nation. “Take heed that you oppress not the *stranger*, for thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt.” The Mosaic law, if actually *seclusive*, and if in one sense stern, was benign also, as well as just. In truth the Israelitish Law stands alone among the documents of antiquity, as an efficient Protector of the feeble and destitute, against the strong—and of the poor against the rich. Nothing, in the eye of this law, made men abominable, but vice :—it authenticated no sanctity apart from the practice of justice and mercy. What more can we wish for, or think of, in a code that professes to come from Heaven !

The prophets, as they rose, vigorously maintained the Mosaic provisions in favour of the alien. For example—“Let not the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak saying—The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people. The sons of the stranger (*i. e.* all men without distinction, not of the Abrahamic race) that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant ;—even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of

prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer FOR ALL PEOPLE."* The conversion of the Gentiles to the true religion is, as every reader of the Bible knows, a very frequent theme with the prophets: and when combined, as we find it, with pungent upbraidings of the chosen race, on account of their inveterate obduracy, must be held to constitute the strongest counteractive influence that can be imagined against repulsive national prejudices in matters of religion.

To what extent, during the lapse of many centuries, the Jewish institutions and Sacred Books actually diffused the blessings of true religion among the surrounding nations, is a point not now to be ascertained. Yet evidence is not wanting in support of the supposition that the influence of the Hebrew polity and literature spread, in some directions, very far, so that the splendour of Truth which fell in a full beam upon Zion, did in fact radiate on all sides, and was, "as a light to lighten the Gentiles," even to the ends of the earth. Without assuming to know more than history enables us to speak of, we may safely conjecture that the successive captivities of the two portions of the Hebrew race subserved this benign intention, and operated to scatter the elements of virtue and piety over most parts of the eastern world. In like manner as Christianity was at first diffused by means of persecution, so, probably, had Judaism been diffused, again and again, by the conquest and desolation of its native soil. And it is to be noted that those who

* Isai. lvi. 3, 6, 7.

thus went forth—the compulsory missionaries of a pure theology, left the land of their fathers before the age when the proud temper which afterwards made their name odious in all the world, had sprung up.

But we have affirmed, that fanaticism has its rise, either in a gloomy conception of the Divine Nature, or in a belief which attributes the immediate control of human affairs to malign invisible powers. A main consideration then, when the tendency of the Hebrew Scriptures becomes matter of inquiry, is the representation they make of the character of Jehovah. In addition to what has already been said on this point, some special circumstances should be adverted to.

We naturally read the Old Testament in the light of the New. Or, in reading the Old, we carry with us those brighter or more refined elements of Theology to which the Gospel has given prominence; and then we measure the undeveloped principles of the precursive dispensation by the standard of the later. Yet a different mode of procedure is demanded by historic justice;—for plainly, we ought to form our conceptions of the religious system given to the descendants of Abraham, by paying attention to the position in which it stood in relation to the sentiments and practices of the nations around it, during the ages of its destined continuance.—Judaism, such as we find it in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, is not so properly thought of as a beam of light from heaven, shining on a certain spot of earth; as an energy of resistance, or a defensive power, maintaining, from age to age, a difficult

position, against mighty assailants on all sides. Before we can fairly say what was Judaism, we must know to what it was opposed ; and what were the errors it kept at bay.

Is it then true that these ancient books present a stern and formidable front? Is the Divine Majesty, as spoken of by the Seers of Israel, girt about with terrors, and do thunderbolts play around the footstool of his throne? Yes; but what were those delusions of which this same awful revelation made itself the antagonist? Nothing less horrible than the murderous superstitions of the Tyrians, the Sidonians, the Moabites, the Ammonians, the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Babylonians! These were the adversaries of Jehovah; and it was therefore that “a fiery tempest went before Him.” The terrors that made Sinai tremble were conservative means—were defensive weapons—were necessary and benign instruments, employed to expel from the rude minds of an infant nation, the cruel and foul belief and worship of Moloch, of Dagon, of Baal, of Thammuz. The sternness of Jehovah should then be thought of as we regard the compassionate vigour of a Parent, who strives, at all costs, to rescue his children from some cruel and seductive thralldom.

Mere justice, we say, such as the principles of historic inquiry demand, not to speak of religious considerations, requires that we should read the Old Testament under this recollection; and as often as we meet with that which, to our acquired notions, seems rigorous, or vindictive, we are to bear in mind the sanguinary temper, and the detestable usages from which this same rigour was to preserve the

tribes of Israel. The lapse of four and thirty centuries permits us now to descry only the dim forms of the idolatry that had gained its acmé of cruelty among the nations of Canaan, and the surrounding countries, when Moses led his people into the Arabian deserts. But the more industriously we pursue the faint indications of antiquity, the more clearly do we discern the fitness and necessity of what, in the Jewish history, alarms our modern notions of the Divine Nature.

And yet let it be distinctly understood what the real character of that severity was which distinguishes the ancient Jewish theology? Jehovah is terrible—to none but the corrupt, the unjust, the rapacious, the impure! Toward the faithful and the obedient, toward the penitent and the upright, He was “full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, ready to forgive;—a God pardoning iniquity, and passing by the transgression of his heritage.” Every one conversant with the Scriptures will recall passages of similar import; and it might even be affirmed that, although, in the New Testament, the way of access to the Divine favour is set open in a manner of which the Old Testament knows little; nevertheless, if we were in search of abstract affirmations of the placability and tenderness of God toward man; or if we want affecting instances of Divine condescension, we shall find such passages in greater abundance in the Old Testament than in the New. Moreover—and this fact should never be forgotten, a leading purpose of the ancient dispensation was to protect the human mind from the slavish dread—so natural to it, of those SUBORDINATE MALIGNANT

POWERS, whose tyrannous rage could be propitiated only by horrible rites. In this sense, emphatically, Moses and the Prophets struck at the root of fanaticism, by instating the Holy and Supreme Benevolence in the heart of man, as the ONLY object of fear, and by dislodging from their seats the host of ferocious invisible divinities.

We conclude—and upon an impartial and attentive consideration of the evidence, *first* that the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures is not of fanatical tendency ; and then, that the writers of those books were not men of an exaggerated and malign temper.

In reaching this conclusion we have assumed nothing in behalf of the Hebrew Scriptures ; but have looked at them as we should at any other ancient writings, and have endeavoured to estimate their quality and influence on the ordinary principles of human nature. But the result of such an examination must be—as we undoubtedly believe, to establish the divine original of these books. This point secured, and it is secured too on every separate line of argument that is applicable to the subject, and then the fact—That the Jewish Lawgiver, and the prophets, and the poets of Israel were men immediately commissioned and empowered by God, affords a proper solution of every apparent difficulty, arising either from the spirit and complexion of particular passages, or from the course of conduct enjoined in special instances.

What can be more manifest than the propriety of this mode of treating such difficulties ? For one man to accost another as the enemy of God—or to adjudge him to perdition, or to strike him to the

earth, is indeed an outrage, bespeaking in the assailant the most dire fanaticism, if not absolute insanity. But the case is altogether altered if this same denunciator, or executioner of the wrath of Heaven, is able to shew Heaven's credentials actually in his hand. He whom God sends, speaks the words of God—delivers a trust which he has no liberty to evade, and performs a part that can have no immorality, because it proceeds from the Source of Law. This rule applies, without an exception, to all those instances, so often and so idly produced, in which the question hinges exclusively upon the fact of a divine injunction given to the speaker or the agent. If the prophet, or the chief, were indeed inspired, then the words he utters, or the deeds he performs, are not to be accounted his ; and though arrogant or vindictive—if human only, they are fitting and just—if divine. Concede the divinity of the Scriptures, and then every such objection is merged, or becomes futile. Deny their divinity—and then the argument itself is altogether unimportant.

SECTION X.

THE RELIGION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT NOT FANATICAL.

To entertain, even hypothetically, an argument such as the one now before us, may perhaps seem, not simply superfluous, but even improper. What, it may be asked, has the world seen comparable to Christianity for the benignity of its maxims and spirit? Where are we to find charity, where meekness, where philanthropy, if not in the Gospels?—To inquire then, as if the issue were doubtful, whether this religion be rancorous and fanatical, might appear not more irreverent than preposterous.

Be it so, and yet we must advance in our present course. To a timid objector it is enough to reply that, as in fact the most inordinate species of fanaticism have, in different eras, sprung out of the profession of Christianity, and have in the most intimate manner blended themselves with its principles, there is a very urgent necessity, if we would deal fairly with our subject, for a strict search into the documents of our faith, with this specific view; and the issue of such an inquiry, as we are persuaded, can be nothing else but to prove—*first*, That these writings contain no malign excitements; and *secondly*,

That the writers were personally exempt from every kind of spurious religious feeling.

We are met, on the very first page of the evangelic history, by a choir of supernal beings, announcing the Saviour's birth, which is declared to bring "peace on earth, and GOOD-WILL to men," as well as "glory to God." Has this angelic profession then been borne out, or contradicted by facts? This would be a perplexing question, if we were to impute to systems, or persons, the mischiefs that have chanced to stand connected, ever so remotely, with them. But what we ought to do is to look to the intrinsic qualities of a system; and to the personal dispositions and behaviour of the men who have yielded themselves the most completely to its influence. On *this* ground it may most confidently be affirmed that, as peace and philanthropy are the grand lesson of the Gospel, so have they been its actual fruits.

We should notice the welcome that was given to the "holy child" on his first entrance upon his "Father's house"—the Jewish temple. There the long desired "consolation of Israel" is affirmed to be "a Light to lighten the GENTILES," as well as the glory of the chosen people. Early check, this, to the then prevalent, and fast ripening national arrogance of the Abrahamic race! Although it had, long before, been thus "written in the prophets," no principle could more offend the prejudices of the times than this—That the Messiah, the King of Israel, should bless, rather than exterminate and vanquish, the uncircumcised families of the earth.

The austere style of the Baptist, as we descry him

amid the frowning solitudes of the Jordan, and see him, with his feet washed by its dark waters, seem to promise something not in harmony with those cheering precursive notes of mercy to mankind we had lately listened to from heaven. And so in fact the preaching of John is found to be—in “the spirit and power of Elijah”—a ministry of reproof—a piercing call to repentance; and especially a sharp rebuke of national sanctimoniousness and corruption:—or to say all in a word, the preaching of John was an energetic corrective of the hypocrisy and fanatical presumption of his countrymen. “Bring forth,” he cries, “fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham to our father;’ for I say to you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham:” Even if the Jewish race, with its proud pretensions, were swept from the face of the earth, Abraham should not want a spiritual progeny; for the Divine power would (as actually it did) instate the Gentiles in the privileges of the ancient church. The Baptist then, although, as we catch a distant glimpse of him, while listened to by a promiscuous crowd, he may have the air of a virulent declaimer, is not such in fact; for if we will but draw near, and give attention to his discourse, we find him vigorously assailing the national arrogance; and we hear him humbling his hearers in their own esteem, by insisting on those prime articles of morality which had dropt out of their scheme of farcical piety. Moreover he fails not to renounce, for himself, the honours which the people would have paid him:—but this modesty

bespeaks him a prophet of the Lord ; and proves that he was no aspiring sectarist.

In the narrative of the temptation, the principal circumstance—our question in view, is an assertion, by our Lord, of the claim of God to human reverence, in contradiction of the impious homage which the Rebel Spirit falsely challenged to himself, as master of the world. The rebuke, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” bore against all forms of polytheistic superstition, the essence of which, under whatever guise, is a servile deference paid to malevolent invisible power. And this comprehensive condemnation of the worst of all errors was followed up, throughout the course of our Lord’s ministry, by his exercising a rigorous control over the infernal legions :—The malignant power was no longer to usurp the regards of mankind ; for a stronger arm than his had despoiled him of the “armour wherein he trusted ;” and henceforward the Supreme Benevolence alone was to be looked to by man, as the object of hope and fear. The tendency of the New Testament is altogether to emancipate the human mind from its ancient thralldom to the invisible tyrants ; and it does this, not—let us remember, by affirming the non-existence of such beings, but by exposing their guile, and by declaring their enchainment, under the hand of the Omnipotent Son of God.—In thus removing the grounds of superstition, Christianity, wherever it takes effect, dries up the source of fanaticism, the virulence of which is drawn from the belief of a malevolent administration of human affairs.

Every form of religious rancour is *implicitly* re-proved in the announcement which the Divine

Deliverer makes, at an early stage of his public ministry, of the purpose of God toward mankind ;—“ The Father hath so loved THE WORLD, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For the Father sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world might be saved through him.”—And again, when he declares that—“ The Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” Whether it be the self-tormenting rigour of the ascetic, or the deadly zeal of the inquisitor, or the martial rage of the Moslem conqueror, or the crabbed bigotry of the modern dogmatist ; each is utterly condemned, and the specious pretexts of each are torn away, by this first axiom of Christianity—That the Gospel is at once the expression and the means of the DIVINE BENEVOLENCE TOWARD MANKIND AT LARGE. Any zeal, therefore, which is not benign, is not—Christian zeal ! rather, we should deem it an infernal impulse that drives on those who, under pretext of religion, torture themselves, or others, or indulge sentiments of contempt and hatred toward mankind in the mass, or toward particular bodies of men. If this be our spirit, it is not the spirit of Jesus ;—for he was “ the Saviour of all men.” It is Satan—not Christ, who is the author of cruelties, and the patron and upholder of intolerance.

A broad foundation being thus laid in the Gospel for philanthropy—nothing more broad can be imagined, those condemnatory announcements which bear out the message of mercy, are wholly deprived of the pernicious force that otherwise might have

seemed to belong to them. Nothing can destroy men, we learn, but their final contempt of the Divine forbearance. All men therefore are to be regarded as salvable; and all are, in a genuine sense, the objects of the same Benevolence which has rescued ourselves from perdition. To give effect to this divine benevolence—so far as human agency may extend, is the part that belongs to Christians; nor can any motive be authentic that will not freely play in concert with the unrestricted zeal of compassion.

Our Lord, in his discourse with the Samaritan woman, throws open the gate of religious privilege to all nations;—excluding at the same time the Jewish arrogance, and securing the authority of truth, against a spurious candour. “Ye (Samaritans) know not what ye worship;—for salvation is of the Jews.”—It is they who are the keepers of the recorded will of Heaven; it is from among them that shall spring up the new and universal religion. Nevertheless this new religion, although of Jewish birth, is not to be the property of the worshippers at Jerusalem only; but shall comprehend men of every country who “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”—The Gospel advances always on a precise line, nor must it ever be turned from the prescribed track.—Yet is this line “gone forth into all the world,” and like the equatorial, must girt the globe!

The motives of Christianity, like the powers of nature, produce their fruits only in combination: whoever severs, perverts them. Thus when it was said to the first promulgators of the Gospel, who were just about to “go forth as sheep among wolves”

—"Happy are ye when men speak evil of you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake," this same self-congratulation, which it was lawful to admit under injurious treatment, might readily subside into a malign habit within the bosom of the oppressed Christian, if it were not balanced by that other exhortation, soon subjoined, and so emphatically given—"Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." The fanatic divides these counteractive elements of feeling. He blesses himself in the presumption of Divine favour; and if he does not loudly curse his persecutor, mutters an anticipation of the wrath that is to fall upon "the enemies of God."—To love his enemy, and heartily to wish him well, is a point of virtue he scarcely pretends to. But the rule of Divine forgiveness brings these very same motives into close contact. Sternly is it declared that he who grants no pardon to others, shall receive none for himself. The vindictive religionist avoids the application of the rule to his own case, only by renouncing the supposition of personal guilt:—he who has no sin, needs not shew indulgence; and thus in fact, we find an egregious conceit of the favour of God towards himself, to be always the germ of the rancorous sentiments of the bigot.

If at any time our Lord—"meek and lowly" as he was, assumed the tones of indignant reproof, we find it on those occasions precisely when the sanctioning Scribe, Pharisee, and Lawyer, stood before him;—not when surrounded by the "publi-

cans and sinners" of the people. Never before had haughty and hollow religionism received so severe a reprimand as that reported by the Evangelist,* in which, not merely is the veil rent from the face of hypocrisy; but the culprit's false heart is laid open, and the double-edged knife pierces to the "dividing asunder of the joints and marrow;"—nay, the very "thoughts and intents of the soul" are exposed to the gaze of all. Neither is the hypocrite or the fanatic spared, although he be found among the chosen followers of the Lord.—"Have not I chosen you twelve," said the Lord; "and one of you is a devil?" And how did he check the intemperate zeal of those of them who would have called down fire from heaven to avenge the inhospitality of certain Samaritans:—"Ye know not what spirit ye are of." And again, as if to shut out on every side a false temper in matters of religion, he defended the harmless trespass of his followers in the corn field, against the punctilious objection of the Pharisees:—"If ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the innocent." Is not this answer the very antithesis of fanaticism? does it not reach the core of spiritual acerbity?

So far as the public ministry of Christ may be termed criminative and severe, the object of it was that very disposition whence fanaticism takes its rise, namely—an affected zeal for the purity of religion, shewing itself in a conceit of the Divine favour toward the zealot himself, and an envious contempt of the mass of mankind. These were in

* Matt. xxiii.

fact the characteristic vices of the time, and it was against these, and these alone, that the Divine Teacher directed the vehemence of his reprehension. We say then, that if a malign zeal is found to be the national fault of the Jewish people, at the era of Christianity, the teaching of Christ, far from fomenting that pernicious temper, condemned it, in the most bold and unsparing manner.

Yet we should look to those occasions on which the temper of a Teacher, or the tendency of a system makes itself apparent in some incidental and indirect manner. Now we find an instance of this sort, and a very signal one, when the seventy delegates, after having borne their message through the towns of Jewry, returned to their Master with joy, saying—"Lord, even the dæmons are subject unto us through thy name!" Natural exultation! and yet the feeling whence it sprang was of a dangerous kind; or it was one that demands to be counterpoised by motives of another order. How readily does the imagination kindle at the thought of a near contact with Invisible powers!—and if, moreover, these Powers are thought of as malevolent, the darkest passions rush in to lend their force to the conceptions of evil! Should it happen too, at the same time, that an open triumph has been had over such beings, who long had made sport of human frailty, the gloomy excitement of the soul reaches its utmost point:—or it may do so. Were any such emotions actually rife in the bosoms of his followers—and we must not affirm it to be impossible that they were, our Lord did by no means check the mischief in the manner which the frigid sceptic would approve:—

he did not avail himself of so proper an occasion for rooting out of the minds of his disciples the belief of a malignant and hostile invisible Power ;—far from it—he solemnly authenticates that belief when he says—“I beheld Satan, as lightning fall from heaven:”—and again—“I give you authority over all the power of THE ENEMY.” But the sentiments of his followers were not to be left to rest at this point ;—their feelings were to be carried forward, as all genuine religious emotions should be, into the bright region of hope, humility, and pious gratitude.—“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” To complete the transition from a less benign sentiment, to one more congenial with the spirit of the Gospel, Jesus uttered aloud a thanksgiving which, by a direct implication, conveyed a humiliating lesson to the heart of the hearers. “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes !” If, among the seventy, there was found a proud, an ambitious, or a rancorous spirit, what rebuke could it have received more pointed than the one involved in the terms of this address to heaven ? Fanaticism can take no hold of the human mind until that child-like temper which Christ here affirms and supposes to be characteristic of his disciples, has been thrown off.

Presenting itself as it does in the same connexion, we ought to notice that severe reproof of Jewish arrogance which the parable of the compassionate Samaritan conveys.—What irony more caustic than

that of bringing upon the scene the Priest and Levite, of whom we catch a glimpse as they move off, wrapped in sacerdotal scrupulosity and pride ; while a Samaritan—hated name, comes up to furnish the lesson of piety and mercy ! We ought distinctly to conceive of the virulence of national feelings at the time, if we would understand the cutting force of this apologue. The parable of the Prodigal, in like manner, obliquely, but not obscurely, assails the grudging temper of the Jewish people, and holds forth, in figure, the very line of conduct which the zealots of that nation actually pursued when afterwards they saw “Sinners of the Gentiles” coming to the arms of Divine mercy, and numbered with the family of God. These incidental instances are pertinent to our subject, inasmuch as they shew the steady purpose of our Lord to place his doctrine and his system of morals in direct opposition to the existing sentiments of his countrymen.—He mortified every fond prejudice, as well as reproved every scandal of the times.

The difficult point of practical wisdom in the conduct of a public instructor is always the management of those articles of faith that wear an adverse aspect, one to the other. This is the stumbling stone of the presumptuous reasoner :—this the occasion of offence to the feeble ;—this the ordeal of discretion. Three or four such instances might be named ; but they are all by implication contained in the two great principles—each fully and freely affirmed in the Christian system—namely, The Divine Benevolence—absolute as it is ; and the Divine Justice, involving tremendous consequences to the human race.

It is here that the iron-sinewed theologian, with his paper demonstrations, has outraged at once the Divine Character, and every natural sentiment of equity and goodness ; it is here that the murky fanatic shews his home to be the world of evil ; and it is here, on the other side, that those have stumbled and fallen who scruple not to make the Divine testimony nugatory—whenever it offends them !

How different was the style of the Divine Teacher in this instance ! and in giving attention for a moment to his method—if we do no more, we shall catch a note or two of that celestial harmony which breathed in every word he spoke, proclaiming him to be “from above.”

The then extant belief of the Jewish people, or of the greater part of them, on the subject of future punishment,* our Lord did not mitigate ; nor did he leave it where he found it ; but affirmed it anew, making it an inseparable part of his religion, and giving it his sanction in terms as distinct and irrefragable as language affords. Compared with Moses, or with the Prophets, or with other Religious Institutions, Christ might in a sense be called the Herald of Wrath. Not one of his ministers—so far as appears, came up to their Master in the fulness or the frequency of his announcement of the doom of

* A knowledge of the opinions and modes of speaking prevalent among the Jews is necessary to a correct understanding of our Lord's language on this serious subject. Philo especially should be searched for this purpose. The doctrine he holds is of a very decisive character—ὅτι οἶμαι ἡ ἀσέβεια κακὸν ἐστὶν ἀτελεύτητον, ἐξαπτόμενον, καὶ μηδέπω σβεσθῆναι δυνάμενον. . . .
De Profugis.

the impenitent. They, though with firmness, yet with modesty and fear, assert the terrors of Divine Justice ; but he speaks like one whose eye, piercing the thin veil of the material world, continually gazed upon the mysteries of the unseen ! The apostles spoke in the confidence of faith ; Christ, with the vivacity of immediate knowledge.

And yet, who like Jesus has manifested the glory of the Father, whose glory is love ? By what means then did he bear in his hands, together, these antagonist elements of religion ? Certainly it was not by labouring to extenuate at one time, what he had too boldly affirmed at another. Never did he insinuate, or throw out as by chance, mitigations which the sceptic might catch up, and expand at his pleasure. Neither did he enter at any time upon exculpatory reasons in behalf of the divine administration of human affairs ; nor open the way to abstruse speculation, such as should establish the eternal consistencies of goodness and severity. Not a syllable did he furnish as text to the learned disquisitions that have entertained the schools.—In a word, our Lord made no direct provision against those abuses or ill consequences that might flow from his doctrine.

Nevertheless these ill consequences are in fact so counteracted, that Christianity, even by the admission of its enemies, and taken as a whole, and such as its Author left it, is bright and benign. The means by which the two elements of wrath and love are balanced, so far as they may be traced, bespeak the same wisdom that adjusts and balances the antagonist powers of nature. The first, and most obvious

counteractive means, is the invariable annexation of the threatened punishment to vicious acts, and to an impious life ; so that the doctrine bears always upon the conscience, and gives its aid to virtue.

In the next place, our Lord, without ever attempting, on abstract ground, to harmonize the divine attributes, exhibited the glory, beauty, and sweetness of the **PATERNAL** Creator, Preserver, and Sovereign, in a manner never before thought of, and which can never be steadily contemplated by any human mind without imparting sentiments that effectually exclude morose or fanatical emotions. This is a countervailing provision, not formal indeed, but infallible, and of irresistible force. The providence of God, both universal and particular, comprehensive and minute, the unremitted care of life, the regard to the wants, and fears, and hopes, and even comfort, of all creatures, the constant attention to prayer, the special regard to the poor, the feeble, and the lowly, and the Divine forbearance toward the disobedient ;—all these benign elements of theology form the prominent characteristics of the teaching of Christ.

But how can we reconcile such exhibitions of tenderness and love with the actual facts, announced by the same Teacher, of the ruin and miseries of man ? The teacher himself, confiding in the real, though occult consistency of what he declares, and not anxious for consequences, throws out the two great principles, and leaves them to work as they may, within the human bosom. With that serenity which befits the Author of Christianity, as Author of all things, and Sovereign of the Universe, he

puts in play each proper impulse of the moral economy.—Purblind Philosophy may call them incompatible:—Nature and Truth shall pronounce them one.

We have yet to advance a step further. So contracted and exclusive in its modes of feeling is the human mind, that if we converse much and long with terrible or afflictive conceptions, and heartily surrender ourselves to the impression of certain appalling facts, it is not easy to avoid becoming sullenly indifferent to the present sufferings of mankind ; as if it were of little moment what those are enduring in the present life, who must endure worse in the next. No insensibility of this kind affected the human sympathies of the Saviour of the world : He thought lightly of no pain or want that attaches to mortality :—infirmity, or anguish, or hunger, he cared for, and relieved.—“ He bare our infirmities, and himself took our sicknesses.” The benevolence of the Lord Jesus was like the radiance of the sun, which, while spreading itself over the fields of the universe, even to the utmost verge of nature, pervades also the most obscure recesses, penetrates every depth, and brings warmth and joy to the meanest orders of the sentient world !

Let us be never so much perplexed in our endeavours to reach any conclusion that may fully reconcile opposing truths, the fact stands before us—a fact full of instruction, that He whose doctrine inspires us with extreme alarm on account of the great mass of our fellow men ; nevertheless, when, in the desert, he looked upon the multitudes that had left their homes to follow him, “had compassion upon

them," and would by no means leave them to suffer, even a transient hunger and fatigue. The same spirit pervades every action; he healed—"as many as were brought unto him," he rejected none;—he made no conditions; but dispensed good with a royal facility, as well as with sensitive tenderness. Nor did the momentous importance of his public work alienate him from the suavities of personal friendship. Still we find no theologic explication of the apparent contrariety of Love and Justice; but instead of it, are presented with a living exemplar of the harmony of the two.

Another striking characteristic of our Lord's personal feeling, as exhibited in his mode of teaching, bears directly upon our subject.—This is the style of his tropes and apologues. If the imagination be susceptible of vivid impressions, it is scarcely possible frequently to entertain conceptions of terror, without losing the taste that finds it recreation among the gay beauties, and simple charms of nature. Fruits and flowers, bright skies and rustic occupations, retain no hold of the spirit that often takes its flight through the abyss of horrors! To stoop and to gather illustrations, and to do so by habit, from the garden and the field, and from the humble labours of domestic life, has never been the manner of those who have borne heavy tidings to their fellow men—even when their motive has been sincere and benevolent; much less of the ireful reformer, the glance of whose eye seems to scathe whatever dares to look green and happy.

Yet it was not so with Jesus. When we bear in

mind the alliance of the moral sentiments with the imagination, and think how naturally subjects of a vast and afflictive order cloud the mind, and impart to it an inflexible rigour, we must contemplate with amazement, in our Lord's discourses and parables, the junction of elements seemingly the most incongruous.—What more appalling—what, if indeed we follow it to its meaning, what more distracting to the heart, than the affirmations which often conclude a series of parables that has brought together the smiling beauties of the visible creation, and the gentle suavities of common life! Considered as literature merely, our Lord's discourses, as well public as private, take their place, not along with the vehement and impassioned harangues of orators; but with the mildest and most attractive class of pastoral and dramatic compositions. Yet what were the truths that stretched a dark and deep foundation beneath this fair superstructure of heavenly wisdom?—truths which, when vividly perceived by other men, have absorbed the soul, and given a sombre colour to every sentiment. Nowhere, except in the discourses recorded by the Evangelists, do we hear such mingled tones of terror and sweetness issuing from the same lips. The apostles, though raised above the common level by the Spirit that dwelt in them, yet never reached, nor even approached, the elevation of their Master. Their style was human; and the weighty matters of their message to mankind so pressed upon their hearts that they became, in some measure, abstracted from the smaller interests of life, and insensible to the graces of nature. Their language, though figurative, is always urgent

and grave, and befitting men whose task is felt by themselves to surpass their powers.

The graceful serenity and happy ease of our Lord's mode of teaching should command our profound attention, *first*, as an indirect, yet irresistible evidence—we should say *manifestation*, of his divinity, and of his absolute superiority to all other teachers; and *secondly*, as involving a proof, far better than any metaphysic demonstration, of the interior consistency of the benignity and justice of God. The more we meditate upon this subject, the more shall we be convinced that it furnishes all we ought anxiously to wish for in explication of the Divine attributes. He in whom were concentrated these very attributes—He whose purity was the purity of God, and whose compassion was the compassion of God, is heard to utter, in one and the same breath, the language of inflexible Justice, and that of absolute Love! Holiness and benevolence then, are one; and we should be content to confide implicitly in such a proof that they are so.

But we must now turn from the Master to his Disciples.

There may fairly be room to ask whether, after their Master had left them, and when they became the objects of the fury of their countrymen, and entered fresh upon a field of extraordinary excitements, the first disciples maintained *weakness* and *charity* of temper; or yielded to those emotions which similar circumstances have too often awakened. A question like this must be determined, not by the formal testimony of the parties in their own cause; but by inferences drawn from incidental allusions, or

casual expressions. And is it credible that a company of men really exorbitant in their modes of thinking, and gloomy or malign in their tempers, should hand down to posterity a collection of memoirs and letters, such as shall convey no indication of the passions that were working in their bosoms? This were indeed the greatest of miracles; and we reject, without scruple, the supposition that it might be true.

As in the eye of irreligious men any degree of feeling in matters of religion is enthusiasm, so must the same persons deem any sort of zeal in the propagation of it, fanatical. If it be enthusiasm to pray, it is certainly fanaticism to travel from city to city, troubling men's minds by announcements of future judgment; and how much more fanatical to encounter stripes and imprisonments in such a course, or actually to meet a violent death, rather than abandon the enterprize of converting mankind to a system of opinions! If *now* it be enthusiastic for a man to account the service and worship of God the main business of his life, unquestionably the course of conduct pursued by the first propagators of the Gospel, as well as by all who have since trodden in their steps, was preposterous. But if the Gospel be indeed from Heaven, our estimation of men and things must obey another rule. In this case it must be granted, that whatever might be the immediate consequences of the agitations they excited, and even although the public tranquillity was much disturbed in all quarters of the Roman empire by their preaching, nevertheless, the zeal of the apostles was strictly reasonable, and their fortitude and courage in the

best sense magnanimous. There still however remains a question which may be prosecuted, even after this general admission has been made ; namely—whether the apostles and their companions, in fulfilling the extraordinary part assigned to them, at all forgot personal moderation, charity, and benevolence ; or it may be asked whether we find them, when placed in circumstances of peculiar excitement, acrimonious, vindictive, ungovernable ? In a word, is their language and conduct that of fanatics, or such only as well became good and honest men, commissioned to establish in the world, at any cost to themselves, the great principles of piety ?

The hour of trial for the temper of the disciples of Christ was when, after having got possession of the popular favour, it rested with themselves either to fan the kindling flame of national feeling, and turn it vindictively upon the rulers—a course which evidently these rulers apprehended as probable,* or to avail themselves of the attention they then commanded, for the purpose of enforcing the spiritual objects of their ministry. If the readiness of the Jewish rabble, at this period, to obey every violent impulse be considered, and it be recollected too, that the apostles were themselves men of the lower class, and destitute of motives of policy, and moreover, very lately, like their countrymen, filled with expectations of secular aggrandizement ;—if we bear in mind that Peter, James, and John, the rustics of Galilee, were, only a few weeks before the day of Pentecost, dreaming of temporal dignities—palaces

* " Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Acts v. 28.

and regal splendour, we are then qualified to estimate fairly the language held by them when surrounded by the thousands of the people that thronged the precincts of the temple. Not only do we find no tampering with the national passions of the multitude, but the tide of feeling was sent in upon every man's personal sense of guilt;—the most effectual of all means this, of assuaging tumultuous excitements. Nor were even the just feelings of indignation worked upon by the use of acrimonious terms. On the contrary, the most indulgent construction which the facts admitted was put upon the sanguinary act of those who had crucified “the Holy One—the Lord of Glory.” “And now brethren,” says Peter, “I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.—Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.—For God, having raised up his Son Jesus, hath sent him to BLESS YOU, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Assuredly this is not the language, either of demagogues, or of fanatics! Whoever would affirm it to be so must entertain strange notions of human nature, and be ignorant too of history. The demagogue never extenuates the conduct of the authorities he is aiming to overthrow;—the fanatic does not bless, but curse. The same simplicity of intention, reaching just to the point of firmness and fidelity, but not going beyond it, is conspicuous in Peter's behaviour before the rulers:—he adhered to his instructions—the instructions of heaven; yet neither defied his judges, nor railed upon them; but, appealing to their common sense, he left himself

in their hands. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye."

The pattern of behaviour thus set by the apostles on the first occurrence of persecution, was adhered to in all those instances which come within the range of the canonical history. The story is ever the same ;—on the one part, a furious intolerance and cruelty ; on the other, firmness, simplicity, and patient endurance of wrong. Thus it was that the protomartyr shewed of whom he had learned the lesson of meekness, when, dying under the hands of a ruffian mob, he exclaimed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge !"

In Luke's memoirs we soon lose sight of Peter and his companions, and must look to their epistles for evidence on the question whether, through a course of years, their spirits remained unhurt by persecutions and contempt. Was the patience of these preachers at length worn out ; or did they become as they grew old, captious and imperious, within the church ; and turbulent and morose without it ? It is natural to turn first to the epistles of Peter, both on account of his official preeminence in the apostolic college, and because the impetuosity of temper which the evangelic narrative attributes to him, would make it probable that, if any of the twelve overstepped the line of meekness and moderation, he would be the one.

Whatever difference may present itself, in comparing the evangelic history of Peter's early conduct, with the writings that convey the sentiments of his matured mind, this difference ought to be attributed

to the gradual influence of the system of opinions he had embraced ; and if we are asking What the tendency of that system was ? nothing can be more fair than to mark its operation upon a mind so peculiarly susceptible of strong excitements. If, notwithstanding certain formal precepts of a contrary aspect, the real operation of Christianity had been to cherish contumacious, ambitious, or virulent dispositions, nothing could have prevented the display of that result, after it had been ripened by the various occasions and trials of thirty years. Chief of the new sect, and distinguished, among his colleagues on several accounts, Peter would have become arrogant, jealous in the defence of his supremacy, and—like prelates of after ages, a strenuous assertor of apostolic authority. This we say, must infallibly have happened—human nature being the same in that age as in every other, if the natural operation of common motives had not been effectively counteracted by the tendency of the system to which this ardent spirit was devoted. It is in fact, a circumstance highly remarkable, that neither of the epistles of Peter contains the slightest allusion to the distinction conferred upon him by his Master ; nor indeed any assertion of the dignity of the apostolic office. Humility itself breathes its sweetness in that one passage which refers to pastoral power.* Or if we do not

* “Your Presbyters I exhort, who am a fellow-presbyter, &c. . . . Keep the fold of God—exercising the episcopal office not from compulsion ; but readily and piously, *κατὰ θεόν* : neither from sordid motives ; but in the spirit of fervour ; nor yet as domineering over the heritage (*τῶν κληρῶν*).”—Thus speaks the “Prince of the Apostles”—the “Vicar of Christ”—

feel at once the full force of this proof of the meekness and simplicity that the Gospel engendered, let us place these epistles by the side of some specimens of episcopal letters, belonging to the second and third centuries !

We well know what are those points of collision that bring fire from the soul of the fanatic :—the cruelty of the oppressor he can speak of only in terms of sympathetic rancour. But it was not thus that Peter refers to the authorities under which Christians had already suffered the most exasperating injuries ; nor was it in any such mood that he laid down the rule of patience in tribulation, wrongfully inflicted. It is quite certain—or as certain as any moral evidence founded on the constant laws of the moral world can make it—That the aged writer of the two epistles in question had received no aggravation of the native faults of his character from Christianity ; but on the contrary, that these tendencies were corrected, nay dispelled by its operation. Evidence of this sort can never approach nearer to conclusiveness than it does in the instance before us ; and we hesitate not to draw from it an absolute historic inference—That the Gospel, *such as it was in the age of Peter*, had no malign or fanatical quality.

A very peculiar style, and a peculiar spirit too, distinguish the Epistle of JAMES. Besides the vigour and simple majesty of the language, which carries us back to the age of the prophets, there is, the “holder of the keys”—the “first Sovereign Pontiff;”—the leader of the Popes!—and the predecessor of the Gregorys, the Innocents, the Leos, the Alexanders, of Rome!

throughout it, a straitforward good sense that scatters at a stroke, the pretexts of hypocrisy, and the illusions of religious conceit. This venerable writer enters the Church, scourge in hand, to drive thence those corruptions which most readily find a lodgement under sacred roofs. Nevertheless the mode of reproof, and its terms, bespeak affection, as much as fidelity. James is severe, and penetrating; but not acrid or virulent. Especially he assails the characteristic faults of the Jewish mind—the religious arrogance, presumption, and laxity;—the asperity of mutual crimination, and that disposition—so remarkable in this people, and the parent of faction—to assume, individually, an intolerant jurisdiction over other men's conduct and opinions. If among the Jewish converts, as is probable from other evidence, the bad passions generated by spurious piety were then making their appearance in the infant Church, this apostolic writer at once discerned the incipient mischief, and employed all his energy for its exposure and repression.

The pretexts of hollow piety are the main subjects of the epistle of James; but a single passage, of a different purport, catches the eye, in which the enemies of the Gospel are brought under rebuke. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you—Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." If this commination be viewed in a general light only, as applicable to all instances of oppressive arrogance, it will come under the rule that is applicable to very many passages of the Scriptures, in which God, the Friend and Avenger of the poor and

needy, utters, by the mouth of the prophet, the fierceness of his displeasure against the proud and the rapacious :—the style, the terms, and the matter of blame, are altogether in harmony with what we find so frequently in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets. This language then, of stern condemnation, is not to be attributed to *the writer* as characteristic of his personal dispositions, until we have disproved his claim to be considered as the messenger of Heaven.

But there is room to believe that a more special reference is contained in the passage. The epistle was written, as it seems, a few years only (not more than eight) before the destruction of Jerusalem, and at a time when, forewarned as they had been by the Lord, and probably in a manner more explicit than appears in the Gospels, the Apostles could entertain no doubt of the near approach of the awful catastrophe of the nation. The signs of the coming desolation were then gathering upon the heavens.—James, head of the Church at Jerusalem, and constantly resident there, could not look upon the infatuated Rulers of the people without desecrying, as if inscribed upon the front of their pride, the divine sentence of reprobation, which so soon was to take effect.—He beheld these men adding to all their other crimes, the deeper guilt of rejecting the Messiah, and of persecuting his followers.—How then could he be silent when he saw Christians themselves, with a servile easiness, flattering the very persons upon whom the wrath of Heaven was just about to alight ?—Do not, he asks, these same arrogant chiefs oppress you, and draw you before the judgment

seats?—and is it in deference even to your persecutors, that ye despise the poor, and thrust him down in your assemblies to the place of contempt?—What is this but implicitly to take part with the enemies of Christ, against yourselves? The disposition to pay court to the profligate and cruel masters of Israel must be checked;—and it is effectively checked in the passage which announces the unparalleled miseries that soon after fell upon the Jewish people. And yet the inference urged upon Christians is one of forbearance, not of revenge. “Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” And it was an inference too of peace and kindness among themselves. “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned.—Behold the Judge standeth before the door.”

The severity of JUDE, like that of James, is aimed, not at the mass of mankind, but at the Christian community itself, and is employed chiefly to expose and condemn those very disorders whence fanaticism takes its rise. There had “crept in unawares” among the Christians, men, not only of dissolute life, but of vain, turbulent, and factious dispositions, who “despised dominion—spoke evil of dignities, and of things they understood not”—who, from the wildness and unprofitable exorbitancy of their minds, were not unfitly described as “clouds without water, carried about of winds; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” These men were “separatists” also, and seem to have wanted little which might entitle them to rank

with the most virulent or debauched of those who afterwards made the name of Jew a shame and terror through the world. It is manifest that the Jewish fanaticism, which was then fast reaching its height, spread itself by contagion within the precincts of the primitive church: this was only natural. All we have to do with, is the treatment which the incursive evil received from the Apostles. On this point the short epistle of Jude affords the most satisfactory evidence.—Is it severe? yes, the occasion was urgent; for there seemed not a little danger lest, by its mere proximity, the Christian body should be drawn into the vortex of the national frenzy, and swallowed in the whirlpool of its guilt and ruin. Yet if Jude be severe, where severity was necessary, he forgot not, as passionate reprovers so often do, discrimination and tenderness. “Of some,” says he, “have compassion, *making a difference*: and others save with fear, plucking them out of the fire.” The fanatic deals rather in sweeping condemnations.

Although it may seem quite superfluous to prove that the writings of JOHN are of mild and benign tendency, yet there is a ground on which even these may properly come under our present examination. It is well known that very serious corruptions have often sprung from modes of thinking apparently the most pure, or sublime;—just as mighty rivers descend upon the common level of the world from heights that overlook the clouds, and where there are no storms to feed them. Human nature will not well bear to be lifted to a stage much above that of ordinary motives, or to be cut off from frequent

correspondence with such motives. How often has the dangerous experiment been tried, and always has failed!—it is tried anew in every age by enthusiastic minds! Now, at a hasty glance, it might seem as if the first epistle of John (a treatise rather than an epistle) was of that very sort which engenders an abstracted style of piety; and thus, although itself free from acrid ingredients, might, at second or third hand, become the source of unsocial pietism. Abstract love is but another name for visionary selfishness; and so it has proved in the instance of mystics of all sects.

But in such cases it will be found that the system of piety has been made to rest upon dogmas, metaphysic or abstruse, and not to be expressed in familiar terms.—The “pure love of God,” and of “all creatures in him,” has been a stagnation of the soul, reflecting from its dead surface, not the smiling landscape around; but the mere vacancy of the skies. Has then the “divine love” which John describes and recommends, any such character of subtilty or refinement; or does it rest at all upon a theoretic basis? Every reader of the catholic epistle must confess that it is not so. In the first place the inartificial structure of this composition—so unlike the elaborate rhapsodies of the mystic, contradicts the supposition, as does the homeliness of the style, which, instead of recommending itself to the fastidious taste of sensitive recluses, seems specially adapted to the uninstructed class of readers. But the main circumstance of distinction is this—That the very drift of the whole treatise—the point which, at all events is to be secured, and which rises to view in

each paragraph—till it seems a tautology, is, that no profession of love to God can be admitted as genuine, or as better than “a lie,” if it does not consistently prove itself to include the active love of benevolence towards all around us. “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Now this appeal to common sense is a concise refutation of the principle of mystic religion, which we find to be, that what is occult, is always more worthy than what is sensible or visible. But St. John makes what is occult subordinate to what is visible. Or it might be said that he utterly sets at naught and spurns all modes of religious feeling that are too sublime to be measured by the simplest maxims of common virtue. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”—Or if an exhortation so clear needed a comment, we find it at hand:—“Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

The epistle of John ought then to be regarded—not as the germ of mysticism; but on the contrary, as a pointed caution against every form of hyperbolic piety. The ultimate reason of this caution is not indeed the one which secular men will approve, inasmuch as it does not assume all elevated and intense emotions, fixed on unseen objects, to be absurd or pernicious. Far otherwise; for the apostle carries the notion of true piety to the very highest point, even to that height of “perfect love,” which “casteth out fear.” But while he does so, he employs all his

force in strengthening the connexion—a connexion which the Mystic labours to weaken, between the offices of charity, and those exalted motives that should animate virtue. In a word, the religion of John is not abstruse, but intelligible; it is not theoretic, but practical; it is not monastic, but domestic:—it is the very religion which the Soffee, and the Platonist, and the Pietist, and the Monk, spurn as vulgar, or *natural*, in comparison with his own, which he declares to be “celestial.”

To the “beloved disciple” was assigned the task of closing the sacred canon, and of setting the apostolic seal upon the religion of Christ, after the lapse of a period which saw it exposed to perils of every kind. The most serious corruptions had in fact, before the death of John, connected themselves with the new profession, and had drawn towards it;—just as smaller bodies, and the scum and the wrecks of things, rush into the wake of a stately vessel that rapidly plows the waves. Before the close of the first century there was much room to fear that certain impious and licentious doctrines, bred in the east, should so far borrow—or rather steal, recommendations from the Gospel, as to bring the Gospel itself into disrepute, as well as to pervert many of its followers. The most decisive measures on the part of those who watched for the welfare of the community, were necessary to preserve the very existence of the Church, amid these dangers. The Gnostic, the Cerinthian, and others of the like order, were to be deprived of the aid and credit they drew from the name of Christ.—“If there come any unto you, and bring not the doctrine—already

known and authenticated, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Sacred truth must, when in peril, be preferred to courtesy or hospitality; and he who will be the friend of all, at whatever cost, or by whatever compromise, possesses rather the semblance of charity than its substance. We ought, on this rule, to keep in mind the distinction between a necessary firmness, or even severity, in preserving the outworks of religion, and that churlish rigidity which impels a man to become a sectarist.—The first is known by its taking its stand always on primary and well understood principles;—the second, by its zeal for whatever is secondary, unimportant, unintelligible, and ambiguous.

The most significant of the instances that belong to the review, now in hand, remains to be considered.

If the personal disposition of Peter, such as it betrays itself in the Gospels, would lead us to look narrowly to the turn which Christianity gave to his sentiments and conduct; the temper of PAUL, much more, invites scrutiny, inasmuch as he makes his entry upon the stage of church history in the very character of a fanatic;—a fanatic too, not by accident or external inducements, or secular interest; but by the natural vehemence of his spirit, and the original bias of his mind. That the business of persecution was undertaken by this extraordinary youth freely, is made evident by what we afterwards see to have been his character; for Paul, it is certain, was no subservient being—no tool, and not the man to receive direction from others. A zeal so furious, in so young a bosom, must be held to mark the individual disposition; and perhaps few of those who

have figured on the ensanguined theatre of religious cruelty—from Antiochus to our own Bonner or Taud, would have been able to support their claims to a bad preeminence by the side of Saul of Tarsus, if the light of heaven had not met him on his way to Damascus, and turned the course of his life, as well as changed his heart. The definition of Fanatic, wants little which it does not find in this instance, if we assume as our guide the brief narrative of his early conduct, as commented on by himself. The question presents itself then, concerning this Fanatic-born—did Christianity amend, or did it aggravate his original disposition?

There are on record a few instances of sudden conversions which have passed over the moral faculties with the force of a hurricane, or of an inundation, sweeping away almost every trace of what heretofore had marked the character:—the man has not remained, after the change, what he was, in any other sense hardly than that of bare physical identity. —The warrior and prince, for example, laying down his pride, his plumes, his schemes of empire, and his insatiate passions, has become a self-denying, inane monk!—the lips which a while ago uttered thunders, and made kingdoms tremble, now lisp pater-nosters through the dull watches of the night; and the eyes that shot fire in the bloody combat, are moistened with feeble tears, or peruse the floor of a cell! But it is manifest that the conversion of Saul was not of this sort;—it was no dissolution of his nature. If we had met him—uninformed of what had happened, some years after the change in his course of life, and having known him before it took

place, we should perhaps scarcely have divined the fact from his manner or appearance. The same animation—the same spirit and impetuosity—the very same sparkle of the eye; the same indefatigable industry and impatience of rest. We should have seen indeed that the labours and cares of active life had marked his features; but assuredly should not have said that the bright promise of energy and intelligence had been blighted, or had passed off, into a dull and flaccid imbecility.

The narrative contained in the Acts of the Apostles abundantly proves that Paul's conversion, though it turned the current of his native energy, did not in any degree dry it up. Nor even did his submission to the maxims of the Gospel—curbing as they do the irascible passions, render him so tame or passive in matters of civil right and privilege as perhaps might have been imagined. The instances are of a remarkable kind, and they serve to demonstrate that, while receiving meekly the most extreme ill-treatment which his profession of Christianity brought upon him, and from which Roman law afforded no relief, he never lost sight of any judicial distinction that might avail to skreen him from lawless rage, or magisterial tyranny.

Neither was Paul's spirit broken as a man, nor his sensibilities blunted, nor the vigour and fine finish of his understanding impaired, by his change of principles. His speeches on public occasions afford convincing proof to the contrary, in each of these particulars; and when brought into comparison, one with another, present a very rare example of the faculty which enables a man to adapt himself, at

a moment, to the prejudices or capacities of the persons he addresses: or, if separately viewed, they give evidence of the possession of powers not often assembled in the same individual.—There is found in them the indications of fire and sensitiveness, conjoined with self-command, courage, and moderation:—there is an immovable attachment to principles, together with the most flexible accommodation of the mode and subject of discourse to the personal or national feelings of all parties; and a rare facundity—we might say exuberance of mind, along with the strictest adherence to the ultimate point towards which, from the first, he tends.

The actual influence of Christianity, such as it was in its first era, is thus subjected to an *experimentum crucis* in the case of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Idle would it be to say—“Such and such dogmas or motives, belonging to the Gospel, or implied in it, and affirmed in the epistles of Paul, could not fail to have a malignant or uncharitable influence.” In refutation of any hypothetic argument of this sort, we boldly make our appeal to an example that wants nothing to render it conclusive.—Christianity found Saul of Tarsus a fanatic, both by temper and habit:—a life of privations and injuries naturally exacerbates a fiery disposition, and therefore, “Paul the aged” would have become one of the most implacable of fanatics the world has ever seen, if the system he embraced had actually favoured that order of feeling; or in truth, if it had not exerted a mighty efficacy altogether of an opposite kind. We turn then, for a moment, to his epistles. And with our immediate object in view, we distribute them in three classes;

the *first*, consisting of those which exhibit the doctrines and duties of religion in an abstract form, or without specific reference to parties or occasions. The *second*, comprising those that bear upon the disorders or controversies existing in certain communities; and the *third*, including the private and clerical epistles.

I. Of the FIRST CLASS, the most general, or *impersonal*, is the epistle to the Hebrews; and the fact which meets us at a glance, as pertinent to our inquiry, though of a negative kind, ought not to be slighted.—The elaborate argument of this treatise is addressed to the Jewish converts to Christianity: now when a man has broken himself off from a communion of which once he was the zealous supporter, and especially if he have received cruel injuries from his former friends, it is almost a constant thing to find him casting contempt upon the system he has renounced; while he takes a position as remote as possible from the one whence his opponents assail him. And why should not the rule hold good in the instance before us? Spurned and persecuted by the Jewish authorities, and made the minister of an economy which avowedly was to supersede the ancient dispensation, what would have been more natural than that he should exult over the falling fabric of the Mosaic law, and indulge in the bitterness and irony common to controversy, and especially to controversy in the hands of a renegade. But in contrariety to any such supposition, the epistle to the Hebrews renders as willing a homage to the Mosaic institutions, and to the principles and practices of the Jewish religion, as could have

been offered by Gamaliel himself. The difference between Paul and Gamaliel related only to the ultimate intention of the Law. The Pentateuch sustains no disparagement in the hands of the apostle, who, though he was preaching to all nations an economy which implies the abrogation of that of Moses, would not erect the new upon the ruins of the old ; but rather builds the new upon the old, as its immovable foundation. If at all he inculcates the ancient institute, he does so only in compliance with a divine declaration, to that effect, uttered long before:—"If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."

And if the author of this treatise does not vilify the party he had left ; neither does he flatter the party he had joined:—neither the spite nor the partiality of the sectarist, is found in him.—"I have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing ; and instead of making the progress which might have been expected, have need to be taught afresh the very elements of your profession." And yet this reproof does not spring from a petulance which will be always finding fault, even with friends and favourites ; for the kindest expressions almost immediately follow.—"Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you :—God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love."

Not to insist upon several express admonitions to ■ peaceable and charitable behaviour, and to patience

under persecution, we may safely affirm that a calm, erudite, and refined argument, such as that of this treatise, must be adjudged the product of a mind habitually serene, as well as devout ; and the writer, even by the complication of the inferences on which he insists, proves himself to possess that equipoise of the understanding, which, whether original or acquired, never consists with the prevalence of turbulent and rancorous passions.

The epistle to the Romans, if in some respects more personal than that to the Hebrews, is yet, in the main, a theological and ethical treatise, rather than a letter ; and in like manner demonstrates the calm command which the writer retained of the reasoning faculty—a command often lost in a course of perils, privations, changes of scene, injurious treatment, and public labour ; even if the native temperament be tranquil, much more if it be susceptible of strong excitements. Is it to be believed that, if the youthful violence and bigotry of the writer had been kept alive by Christianity, the combined influence of original temper, of a stimulating system of opinions, and of a life like that of the persecuted Paul, would have left him, at sixty, a reasoner such as he appears in the epistle to the Romans ?

Some kind of exaggeration or distortion of the principles of virtue always characterises fanaticism, and belongs to it under every modification. If at any time there arise a controversy between common sense and good morals on the one side, and some exorbitant pretension to heroic virtue on the other, no such event will ever happen, as that the Fanatic should range himself on the side of the former,

against the latter :—quite otherwise, and as if by an irresistible attraction, does he pass over toward whatever is tumid, enormous, violent ; and as certainly assails whatever is just and modest. With a like certainty do dense mephitic vapours subside into caverns and sepulchres ; while inflammable gases mount to the upper sky. Now a controversy, precisely of this sort, was abroad in the age of the apostles. The rigid portion of the Jewish people had carried to the utmost extreme the national propensity to sanctimonious pride, in contempt of every principle of morality. The Jewish idea of virtue and piety, at that time, might fitly be compared to the image one obtains of a distant temple or palace, when seen through a knotted and misshapen lens :—high and low are reversed ; the pinnacles seem to prop the columns ; the foundations are heaved aloft ; chasms gape in the midst ; every line is broken, and the wings are disjoined from the body. In what manner then did Paul assail these illusions ? Not as a fanatic of some adverse school might have done, by opposing one extravagance to another ; but, as we actually find in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans, by leading the minds of men back, in the most vigorous style of reprobatory eloquence, to the great principles of justice, continence, temperance, and piety ! After solemnly asserting the righteous government of God, with what force does he bring home the unquestioned maxims of law upon the seared pride of the licentious and self-complacent Jew !—“ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God !—through breaking of the law dishonourest thou God ?

—Thou teacher of the law, dost thou steal, commit adultery, and sacrilege?"—This, we say, is sound reason, opposed to corruption, evasions and perversity ; and it carries ample proof of the integrity of the writer's understanding.

But there is a test of character which yet remains to be sought for. Does then Paul use truth and reason as mere instruments of violence in assailing an adversary?—for this is sometimes seen ; does he drive with indiscriminate fury over the ground, sweeping all things before him, good and bad ? In stripping his mistaken countrymen of their cloak of lies, does he rend away their garment also—their genuine advantage ? It is not so. After bringing his arraignment of national casuistry to a just conclusion—a conclusion utterly foreign to the modes of thinking then in vogue—namely, That the true circumcision "is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God ;" he takes up instantly the opposite position, which might seem to have been endangered, and becomes himself the advocate of Jewish distinctions, so far as they were valid. "What advantage then hath the Jew ? or what profit is there of circumcision?—MUCH EVERY WAY." This is precisely the course of moderation ;—this is that gathering up of an argument on all sides, which a wise and temperate man, who is labouring only for truth, will take care not to leave another to do for him. If this is to be deemed the style of the inflated and acrimonious Fanatic, or of the partisan and bigot, we must give up every attempt to establish distinctions, and must grant that all moral characteristics are nugatory.

Let us only imagine ourselves to have heard the young Saul disputing against Christianity with his comrades, on his road to Damascus ; can we suppose that his argument would have been balanced in any such equitable manner ? It is unquestionable that the Gospel, *such as Paul found it*, instead of fomenting in any way the natural intolerance of his temper, had actually restored the equilibrium of his mind—had taught the zealot to be just !

To prove that ALL MEN stand on the very same level of guilt in the righteous estimation of the Impartial Judge, is an argument the fanatic lets alone—if he does not impugn it.—We shall never see him equalizing pretensions, in language such as this. —“What then, are we better than they ? No, in no wise ; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.—All are gone out of the way—have become unprofitable ;—there is none that doeth good—no, not one !” This doctrine the fanatic places on some other ground than that of the universal principles of morality, and he takes care to append to it some saving clause or evasion, such as shall turn aside from himself its humbling inference.

But if, in Paul’s account, condemnation be universal, grace is so too, at least in its aspect toward mankind, and in its proposals. As there is no difference in guilt, so is there none, either in the conditions of pardon, or in the eligibility of men to the Divine favour. “Is God the God of the Jews only ? Is he not of the Gentiles also ? Yes, of the Gentiles also.” And it is now true, as the same writer expresses it in another place, that, under the banner of Christ,

there are no exclusions and no peculiarities.—“Greek and Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus:” or to use the equivalent language of another Apostle—That God puts no difference between man and man ;—is no respecter of persons ; but that “in EVERY NATION he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.”—Bright expansion of heavenly glory !—welcome news from on high ! with emphasis may we say, in hearing this canon of grace—“The true light now shineth !” But what we have immediately to do with is this—That the men who spent their strength, as preachers and writers, in promulgating a doctrine like this, and in an age too such as the one they actually lived in, were assuredly no fanatics. And let it be told that these preachers of universal goodwill were not Grecian sages, but Jews ;—Jews, bred in the very ferment of bigotry ! Moreover the most conspicuous of this band of innovators burst upon the world in the very character of a sanguinary zealot—“a Hebrew of the Hebrews”—a sanctimonious Pharisee, and by early propensity, “a persecutor and injurious.”—We defy contradiction in affirming then, That Christianity, such as the Apostles held it, was not fanatical.

As matter of argument it must be deemed superfluous, and yet as matter of *impression* it might be proper, to adduce the preceptive and concluding portions of this same epistle to the Romans, in proof of the symmetry and completeness of that moral code which the writer promulgates. And after doing so, we should be entitled to the inference, on another ground, that he was no fanatic ;—for the

fanatic never fails to exaggerate morality, on the one side, or on the other. We must not however omit to mention—for it is of peculiar importance, the decisive assertion of the duty of submitting to civil powers, occurring in the 13th chapter of this epistle. Taking with us our modern notions of civil liberty, we might perhaps covet to find in this noted passage, some exception made in favour of popular rights. Be this desire reasonable or not, it is certain that so full and clear a statement of the relative duty of magistrate and subject, *in favour of the former*, is in a high degree remarkable, as coming from a man who, through a long course of years, had endured all sorts of wrongs from the “powers that then were”—both Jewish and Roman. No exasperation, it is evident, had grown as a habit upon the writer’s mind. He did not—fanatic-like, seek to revenge himself upon dignities and thrones, by sapping, in the opinions of the infant sect, the foundations of political obedience. In later ages it is hard to find, among the persecuted, parallel instances of forbearance.

If Christians of every age had but paid deference to it, the 14th chapter of this epistle contains, within the compass of a few verses, a comprehensive refutation of every pretext of religious faction, whether urged by the refractory, or by the despotic party. The simplest principles are always those which mankind are the slowest to learn. It has been so in philosophy; it has been so in the business of civil government; and it is so in matters of religion. A doctrine which, when expressed at large, seems too trite to be formally announced, and

which asks no proof, is the very point that the perversity of the human mind evades or shuns. To whatever causes religious contentions may be attributed, it is certain that Christianity, *as taught by the Apostles*, is wholly guiltless of the mischief. The chapter just named, and another of like import,* abundantly refute the calumny that the Religion of Christ is generative of discords. The wit of man could devise no cautionary provision against such evils more complete, more conclusive, or more perspicuous, than the one we here find. Precept, argument, instruction, have done their utmost. With what freshness and vigour do good sense and charity breathe combined in every phrase and verse of this chapter! If we have been wading through the noisome quags of church squabbles—ancient or modern, the effect upon the mind, in turning to this passage—bright and clear, is like that of escaping from a pestilential swamp, where we were tormented by the musquito, to a hill-top, on which the gales are pure, the sky clear, and the prospect unbounded! To quote any single verse of the chapter, apart from its context, were a damage; for the whole is closely woven together in conformity with the genuine rules of natural and manly eloquence. It only remains to remind the reader of the conclusion we rest in—That the writer of the epistle, whatever might have been his temper in early life, was no fanatic at the time when he addressed the Christians of Rome.

Evidence to the same effect, both of a negative and positive kind, might be drawn from the epistles to the churches at Ephesus and at Colosse. Besides

* 1 Cor. xiii.

the purity and simplicity of the ethical portions of these letters, which bespeak a sound and tranquil mind, the only points to be adverted to, are the explicit assertion in both epistles, of the equalization of religious privileges, and the nullity of those exclusive pretensions on which the Jew founded his contempt of the bulk of mankind.—“Christ,” says the Apostle, “is our peace, who hath made Jew and Gentile one, having broken down the middle wall of partition.”—Again: “Ye therefore are no more strangers and foreigners ; but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” We find also in the epistle to the Colossians a very remarkable, or—shall we say a *prophetic*, caution against that spirit of mingled superstition and fanaticism—of presumption and servility, which so soon made its appearance in the Church, and rapidly spread, and held its sway, undisputed, more than a thousand years. The voluntary (*or artificial*) humiliations—the worshiping of angels—the sanctimonious abstinences—the human traditions—the specious piety, and the idle tormenting of the body ;—in a word, all the elements of the great apostasy are here designated in the most distinct manner ; or as if the many-coloured corruptions of the tenth century had vividly passed before the eye of the writer. How healthy is that piety and that morality which he recommends in opposition to all such absurdities !

II. We turn next to those of the epistles of Paul which, in a more direct manner, are personal communications from the writer to the parties addressed, and which, as they relate to local controversies, dis-

agreements, or partialities, rife at the moment, may be expected to exhibit more of the writer's sensitiveness than a bare theological treatise, or a hortatory letter is likely to display. The genuine character and dispositions of an author naturally become most conspicuous on those occasions when he is wrought upon by personal feelings. Six of the Pauline epistles come under this description ; and we first advert to those that are altogether of an amicable kind, and which embody the writer's lively affection to two favoured societies.

The epistle "to the faithful at Philippi" is a warm expression of feeling, such as is proper to an endeared personal friendship, resting on the basis of a thorough confidence. The tenderness and the graciousness that pervade it are much to our present purpose ; and so is that spirit of fervent piety which it breathes ; for these are conclusive proof of what the influence of Christianity was in its pristine era. But we shall pause only at certain specific indications of the temper of the writer. The first of these is of an extraordinary sort, and may appear to contradict the supposition, drawn from other sources, that the apostles maintained the honours of their high function by a stern and efficacious rebuke of factious proceedings. But the truth seems to be that, although on urgent occasions, and when they had to deal hand to hand with the contumacious sectarist or pernicious heretic, they used with promptitude "the power which the Lord had given them," their native feelings, abhorrent of the despotic and jealous course customary with spiritual dignities, restrained them from employing penal powers, if by any means it

could be avoided. What Paul's inner dispositions were in relation to contentious or ambitious zealots, we here perceive.—“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife—of contention, not sincerely, supposing—intending, to add affliction to my bonds. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice!” Can this be the language of the man who, some thirty years before, had been seen raging through the streets of Jerusalem, and cramming its dungeons with innocent women and children? Christianity truly had done his temper no harm in the interval!

In personal conflict with these vexatious demagogues, Paul might perhaps, from a sense of public duty, have assumed another tone; but we see that when, in the freedom of private friendship, he refers to the rancour of such teachers toward himself, his mind was not that of the despot, or of the fanatic. It is evident, on the contrary, that much personal proficiency in the virtues of self-command, qualified him to admonish others “to be of one accord, of one mind; to do nothing through strife, or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than themselves.”

A similar affection was borne by the Apostle to the Thessalonian Christians; and on the strength of that affection, and in the spirit of conscious integrity, he appeals to them to attest, as well the integrity as the mildness of his ministerial conduct among them. A foreknowledge, probably, of the vengeance then impending the Jewish people, and near to fall upon the rebellious city, seems to be couched in the

terms he employs when speaking of his outrageous countrymen. Yet it cannot be said that the passage breathes a vindictive spirit, or that it is unbecoming the occasion.—“THE WRATH—that specific judgment, long ago threatened, is come upon them to the utmost, who both killed the Lord Jesus, as they did their own prophets; and have persecuted us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men—forbidding the progress of the Gospel among the Gentiles.” Yet the painful theme is instantly dropped, and happier sentiments—the characteristic sentiments of the writer’s mind, prevail.

It is not, as we need hardly affirm, a simple declaration of the Divine displeasure against sin, or the announcement of approaching judgment, that indicate the fanatic;—for this office may in fact be the highest work of charity, and may be performed under the impulse of the warmest benevolence. But it is when the wrath of heaven is a man’s chosen and monotonous theme, and when, without any commission to that effect, he takes it upon him to hurl the bolts of the Most High, this way and that—at individuals or at communities:—it is then that we justly impute malevolence, as well as a gloomy extravagance of temper. Now when we find, in the second of Paul’s epistles to the believers of Thessalonica, one of the most appalling descriptions of the future wrath that the Bible any where contains, it may be enough to compare the insulated passage with the general tenor of the writer’s letters, for the purpose of proving that “the perdition of ungodly men” was as far as possible from being the topic toward which his thoughts continually tended, and

upon which—as is the fanatic, he was always copious, eloquent, and at ease. But we are bound to go further; and while we pause—in the next chapter, at the prophetic description of the great apostasy that, seven centuries afterwards, should reach its height, who does not stand back, as if in the Divine Presence, and confess that it is not Paul, but the Omniscient God who speaks?—Every phrase of terror—is it not deep as the thunder of Heaven? When the Supreme thus distinctly utters his voice from on high, let him that dares come forward to arraign the style?

But we are soon brought back to the level of human sentiments, and again see the writer's genuine character in the casual expression of his mind, as occasions arise. “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.” Here is apostolic vigour—necessary for the general good; nevertheless the culprit is not forgotten; much less consigned to vengeance.—“Yet count him not as an enemy; but admonish him as a brother.” The caution this, of a paternal heart.

The two epistles to the Christians of Corinth, and the one to those of Galatia, are marked by a speciality of meaning in every part, and also by a frequent admixture of personal feelings; yet of a different kind from that which distinguishes the letters last mentioned. Serious errors, practical abuses, and church disorders in the one instance, and a grave perversion of doctrine in the other, brought into play the sterner elements of the apostolic character; and we see, by this means, not only

what was the writer's style of reproof; but what was the temper called up in him by open and irritating opposition to his just authority. Shall it not be now, that the young SAUL—the tyro of Gamaliel, is to reappear on the stage; while PAUL, the disciple of Jesus, stands aside?

The evidence is before us. Nothing can be more natural than the manner of these compositions; nothing more lively or spirited. If we want the native expressions of a writer's very soul, here we have them. And it may be added that, while these three epistles abound with those incidental allusions to facts and to persons which place their genuineness beyond doubt, they present also, in a remarkable degree, those fresh touches of human sentiment—absolutely inimitable, which alone would be enough to assure all who have any perception of truth and nature, that we are conversing with real and living objects; not with spurious images.

The first topic that meets us, and the one which manifestly was uppermost in the writer's mind, is that of the factions that had sprung up among the Corinthian converts.—We reach then here the very point of our *experimentum crucis*.—In what manner does the religious Chief deal with the divisions of those who—many of them, were calling in question his apostolic authority? Now not to insist upon that general rule of policy which leads a chief to manage factions for his own advantage; or to play one party against another, it is certain that, if a man's own spirit be factious—if he harbour a secret virulence, the tendencies of nature will draw him on, ere he is aware, and even against his sense

of personal discretion, to take a side, and to join in the fray. Whatever tone of impartiality he may assume, or how sincerely soever he may wish to compose the feud, he will be sure to throw in some pungent matter that shall increase the ferment. But Paul, on this occasion, neither acts the wily part of the adroit demagogue, nor the involuntary part of the fanatic. He grants not the slightest favour, even by any indirect inference, to his personal adherents in the Corinthian church. But on the contrary, without distinction, condemns and contemns the sectarists of those four denominations.—“Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ!—Is then Christ divided?” And while “one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?” “Babes in Christ”—persons who, notwithstanding all their boasted gifts, were in fact only just opening their eyes (if so much) upon the world of truth. And who is Paul, and who Apollos? Will you say Leaders and Princes in the Church? nay, nothing more than subservient agents in the hand of the Lord. “Let a man so account of us as the ministers (MENIALS) of Christ, and stewards only of the mysteries of God.”

There is neither guile nor ambition in this: nor can it be thought to savour of the smothered inflammatory style of one whose factious temper is always getting the better of his sense of interest, and of his motives of policy. The blow is aimed at the very root of discord; and the apostles themselves would retreat from the place of honour that belonged to them, if no other means could be found for with-

drawing their names from the banners of a party. "In handling this subject," says Paul, "I have thus used my own name and that of Apollos, that ye might learn in us—though in fact we be rightful chiefs in the Church, not to think of any above what is enjoined; and that no one of you be inflated with zeal for one, against another."

The apostolic authority must however be exerted in a manner that shall inspire the disorderly with fear; yet it is not the personal antagonists of Paul that are selected as the objects of the supernatural infliction:—a shameless violator of the common principles of morality is the victim. "In the name of the Lord Jesus, let the incestuous man be delivered unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh; that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

Whatever incidental evils may arise from that separation which Christianity involves, they would all, or nearly all, be avoided, if the apostolic rule were but adhered to—such as we find it luminously laid down in these epistles to the Corinthians, and which, if reduced into an abstract form, might be thus expressed:—That the rigours of church discipline should be made to bear upon *the society itself*; while a bland, unscrupulous and unsanctimonious courtesy of behaviour, on the part of Christians towards others, allows the leaven of the Gospel freely to mingle itself with the general mass of mankind. What can more approve itself to reason than a principle like this? What can be more unlike the supercilious monasticism, and the morose sectarianism of the fanatic? Indeed sectarists and

fanatics of all classes, and in every age, have just reversed the apostolic canon:—that is to say, they have enclosed themselves and their sanctity in a coop of pride, so as to deprive the profane world of the benefit it might have got from the spectacle of virtue so exalted ! and at the same time have expended their entire fund of indulgences—one upon another ! Nothing has been so hard as to get admission into the circle of purity ;—nothing so easy as to live there when once admitted ! It has been like climbing a painful and rugged steep—to find at the summit, ■ luxurious level.

The apostle would have it otherwise. Let us stop to gaze a moment upon his golden, but much-neglected maxim of church polity. Alas, that the roll of church history illustrates its excellence so often by contrarieties !

“ I have here been enjoining you not to hold any intercourse with persons of impure manners ;—but do not misunderstand me, I am not speaking of worldly men, whether covetous or rapacious, or idolatrous ; for to observe any such rule in relation to them, would be to exclude yourselves altogether from the social economy. On the contrary, my meaning is, that you should maintain no intimacy with one who, making a profession of the Gospel, and calling himself a brother, is licentious, avaricious, profane ; is addicted to slander, or is intemperate, or rapacious. For what affair of mine is it to exercise jurisdiction over those who have not voluntarily placed themselves within the circle of church censure ? Such belong to the Divine Tribunal. But judge ye those of your own society :—and in the

present instance, excommunicate this same flagitious person."

How might the Church, by this time, and long ago, have spread itself through the world, and its purity have been maintained, if regard had been paid to the simple rule we have quoted! The same law of charity and integrity, expanded and applied to the difficult question of social communication with idolaters, is brought forward again in the 8th and 10th chapters. How can we refuse to Paul the praise of high good sense, as well as of benignity in this instance? The whole of the practical instructions that fill the middle chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthian church, are eminently characteristic of a temperate mind; and stand in full opposition to the crooked policy, to the acrid bigotry, to the imbecile conscientiousness, and to the foul hypocrisy that so often have deformed the profession of the Gospel.

Does apostolic rigour pursue its victim with inexorable wrath? Far from it. How does the paternal spirit of Paul rejoice—in the second epistle, over the repentant culprit! "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment;—comfort him, therefore, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.—Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him." A Father in the midst of his children does not sooner relent, or hasten more to meet a penitent son, than does this apostle, as we see him administering the affairs of the infant churches.

A delicate part remained to be performed in reference to the indispensable duty of asserting the

apostolic power; impugned as it had been by a factious Jewish party at Corinth. In measure the argument was a personal controversy; yet did it involve common principles. The occasion was of that peculiar and difficult kind on which a public person feels that he must defend himself, as an individual, against those who, in assailing his single reputation, mean much more than to tread a fair name in the dust: in such a case the timid, or the falsely modest, give ground;—and murky pride throws up public interests, rather than descend to explanations with a despised antagonist; while the arrogant or despotic chief comes out in ire to repel the assault, and thinks only how best to save his personal importance.

The course taken by the Apostle is quite of a different sort. The mingled strain of apology, remonstrance, and entreaty, which closes the epistle to the Corinthians, brings together, in admirable combination, the emotions of a highly sensitive, generous, humble, and yet noble mind, striving alternately with itself, and with its sense of public duty. The abrupt transitions, the frequent interrogations, the sudden appeals, and the genial warmth of the whole, impart an historic life to the passage, such as makes the reader think that he sees and hears the speaker actually before him. It is saying little to affirm that a composition of this order stands immensely remote from the suspicion of spuriousness:—if this be not reality, the objects that press upon the senses are not real; and the stamp of truth which marks it, involves also the truth of the Christian system. But this is not all;—for if we ought in any

case to rely upon the universal principles of human nature, as they are gathered from history and observation, we may affirm that it is the property of gloomy or malignant opinions, or of notions that are preposterous and exaggerated, to impart a certain fixedness or monotony to the mind and temper:—the passions become set;—the style of expression, even if vehement and copious, is of one order only;—the themes of discourse are few, and the drift is ever the same. Were it demanded to assign some one characteristic which should mark the fanatic in every case, this *exclusiveness* might be given as the infallible sign. On the contrary, a free play of the faculties, and a graceful versatility of mind, is the distinction of those who live in the light, and inhale the pure breezes of day. An expansive benevolence, conjoined with the mild affections of common life, not only renders the heart sensitive on all sides, but imparts an interchangeable mobility to the circle of feelings, so that transitions from one to another are easy and rapid, and the character, in its general aspect, is agreeably diversified. The storms of December are of one hue, and rush across the heavens in one direction; but the Summer's sky has many colours, and a new beauty for every hour.

Now we might assume the rapid alternation of subjects, and the abruptness and sparkling vivacity of the style, in the passage before us, as sufficient proof of our position, that the mind of Paul, far from having been rigidly fixed in one mood by Christianity, had actually acquired, under its influence, more copiousness of feeling than his early course seemed to promise. The Gospel had made

him a man of *much* feeling, and of *many* feelings. But fanaticism, if it quickens some single sensibility, renders others torpid, and after a while reduces the character to the narrowest range, or brings on intellectual atrophy.

We have yet to advert to the epistle to the Christian societies of Galatia. Written about the middle of his apostolic course, and at the season of ripened manhood, it may be assumed to exhibit the effect of Christianity after it had fully settled itself upon the moral and mental habits of Paul, and before the force of his spirit had become at all abated. We find in it, as we might expect, the highest degree of vigour and vivacity; as well as a very decisive tone, and even an authoritative challenge of submission to his dictates in matters of religious truth. There is nothing feeble in this epistle: yet we meet indications of that paternal tenderness which distinguishes his addresses to the best-loved churches: there is the same candour too in acknowledging whatever was laudable among these societies; and moreover such a mixture of abstract argument, with personal persuasion, as indicates the writer's desire to deal reasonably with whoever would listen to reason. Five-sixths of the whole composition is a calm explanation of facts, or adduction of evidence. But this is not the style of offended pride, when it rankles in the bosom of an intemperate and irritated dignitary.

Yet the main feature of the epistle to the Galatians is the breadth of the practical principles it supports, and the opposition it offers to the bigotry, the superstition, and the spiritual pride of the Jewish

teachers. If Paul be vehement, it is always in behalf of common sense and liberality : if he be indignant, it is when he mantles to break the chain of spiritual despotism : if he be stern, it is to uphold consistency.—Even Peter he “withstood to the face,” on account of culpable compliances with Jewish sanctimoniousness. The obsolete system of national seclusion he discards, by affirming that now, within the Christian Church, all extrinsic distinctions are merged. “There is neither Greek nor Jew, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ;—for all are one in Christ Jesus.” That superstition too, which waits only an accidental excitement to kindle into virulent fanaticism, he blames and condemns. “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereto ye desire again to be in bondage?—Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.—I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain !”—“Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”—“In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith, which worketh by love.” And yet this liberty was not libertinism. “Use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh ; but by love serve one another.”—“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.”

This is that very style of sound sense and moderation, and that GENERALIZATION OF PRINCIPLES, WITHOUT LAXITY, which so grievously offends the imbecile pietist, the scrupulous bigot, and the virulent fanatic. It is the style of Paul ; and his

invariable use of it carries our present argument to a triumphant issue.

III. The four epistles to individuals—especially the three that are clerical or official, demand to be reviewed.

The question in hand might be made to rest upon the solitary evidence of the epistle to Philemon. If we knew nothing more of the writer's temper than what breaks upon us through the tenderness and grace of this short letter—and were informed also that the same person had commenced his course as a sanguinary zealot, the proof would be complete, that the system under which his character had been matured, must have been of the most benign sort. No such inconsistency has ever presented itself on the various field of human nature as that of a man who being by constitutional tendency, fierce and despotic, after yielding himself through a long course of years to the influence of a gloomy creed, was yet, at the close of life, such as this letter declares "Paul the aged" to have been. It is certain then, that Paul's creed was not gloomy; but on the contrary, benign; and benign in the most efficacious sense. There is in the epistle to Philemon a melody of love, struck from the chords of a nicely attuned heart. Yet it was the Gospel, not Nature that had so attuned it.

If a man's character is to be known more certainly from his conversation with his intimate friends or family, than from his public harangues; so, and for the same reasons, a private correspondence is more available for such a purpose than a general

treatise. And again, if there be any one species of private correspondence which, more than another, lays open a writer's secret principles, it is that carried on between men of the same profession, on subjects involving the credit and interests of their calling. The sentiments of public persons towards the commonalty over which they exercise a control founded altogether on *opinion*, are very apt to assume an aspect either of hostility, or of craftiness ; and when such official persons interchange their private feelings, and especially when a superior of the order conveys instructions to the subaltern, there will infallibly peep out, in some part, the sinister sentiment—the harboured grudge, the sly maxims of *professional prudence*, or the lurking acrimony and arrogance toward the populace—if in fact such oblique motives exist in the mind of the writer ; nor will any discretion avail to prevent its appearance.

Now having before us a writer's various compositions, if we go over them all, beginning with those of a general kind, and advance to such as are more specific, and at last, open the packet of his private and professional papers, we compass him on all sides ;—we beleaguer his very soul, we throw open the “keep” of his heart, and leave him no chance of maintaining his concealment. If Paul may not be known from his two letters to Timothy, and that to Titus, no writer can at all be judged of from the records he has left of himself. The genuineness of these letters is abundantly established, by the best sort of proof. No one competent to estimate literary evidence can doubt of it. Moreover they were

composed—the last of them especially, very near the close of the writer's apostolic course, and when his mind had admitted all the influence it could admit from the system to which his life had been devoted. They were addressed too, to subordinates in office ; yet to men endeared and familiar by community in labours and sufferings. What forbids us then—what rule of historic evidence, acknowledged as valid, forbids us to assume these same letters as **CONCLUSIVE PROOF** in a question concerning the quality and tendency of Christianity in its first age?

Let now some speculative reasoner allege that the view presented in the New Testament of the moral condition of mankind, and of the doom of the impenitent, and of the agency of evil spirits, cannot but have a malign influence over the human mind.—In rebutting any such hypothetical objection we should turn from theory to fact, and reply—If the supposition were indeed well founded, it is certain that the young zealot of Tarsus must have received any such fanatical excitement ; and it is certain too, that a thirty years of injurious treatment would so have aggravated and fixed whatever was bad in his natural temper, that his last letters would have reeked with venom. But is it so in fact ? Let these letters say. Must we not acknowledge that, how sad and appalling soever may be the truths on the ground of which the Gospel proceeds, or on which it builds its superstructure of mercy—the efficacious motives it brings in upon the human mind are far more than enough to correct the influence of those facts ; and do actually avail to produce the most perfect examples of gentleness, meekness, and universal goodwill ;

—and to engender this bland philanthropy, even upon an intemperate spirit !

Our evidence on this point has a more extended consequence than may at first appear, and is such as to justify the share of attention now claimed for it.

These valedictory letters in the first place prove, what before we have alleged, that the mildness of the apostle's character, such as it appears in the greater part of his writings, was not the consequence of a prostration of his native vigour ; or an enfeebling of that constitutional vivacity which brought him so early upon the stage of public life. The sort of advice he gives to Titus, in reference to the factious and dissolute Jews of Crete—as well as similar passages in the epistles to Timothy, makes it certain that the repellent force of his mind remained undiminished.—Paul had not become so easy, as to wink at disorders, or tamely to allow, either the apostolic, or the episcopal authority, to be sported with.

Yet it was no personal homage that he demanded, such as ambition seeks for.—“ I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious”—an eminent example of that mercy which even “ the chief of sinners” henceforward may hope to receive. The first point insisted upon in these pastoral admonitions is, that prayer and praise should be offered in the christian assemblies continually on behalf of “ all men,” especially “ for kings, and all that are in authority. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Is it the religious misanthrope who speaks in this

passage? or does it savor of the Jewish grudge against the bulk of mankind? or indicate a covert revenge against the Roman or Jewish authorities, that had every where loaded the writer with injuries? One might, for a moment, fancy that Paul had at length gained access to the imperial saloon—was basking in the sunshine of the court, and thence was issuing mandates to the christian world in the fulness of his complacency! Alas—he was still the tenant of a dungeon!—this command to pray for kings and magistrates was sealed by a hand then actually encumbered with the chain of despotic power!

The description given of episcopal qualifications in these letters might be pertinently adduced as proof of the modesty of the writer's conceptions of spiritual supremacy. To estimate fairly this description, we ought to place in comparison with it certain magnific passages that might readily be quoted from even the most moderate of the Fathers. He who, as we have seen, is neither contumacious towards secular authorities, nor exorbitant in his notions of ecclesiastical prerogative, may justly claim a rare praise, inasmuch as the one of these faults, or the other—if not both together, has ordinarily belonged to men who have stood at the head of religious communities in times of persecution.

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil:—the Lord reward him according to his works;”—an announcement, this, of righteous retribution, and in harmony with the established tone of divinely commissioned men; and necessary to the maintenance of apostolic authority. But we find that the irksome subject is glanced at only, and that an instantaneous

transition is made to one which, although painful also, serves to bring into view that rule of discrimination according to which the apostles meted out their censures—"making a difference, and of some having compassion." "At my first answer" (arraignment) says Paul, "no man stood with me; but all forsook me:—Let it not be laid to their charge!"

A criterion of a man's temper might with great safety be drawn from the simple circumstance of the kind of transitions he is accustomed to make in unpremeditated converse with his friends; or in his confidential correspondence. It is in these sudden turns that the inner texture of the soul is exposed to view. Every one who has been a listener to the familiar talk of mankind, is well aware of the significance of the fact we here refer to. The characteristic of the mind, and of its individual affections, is not so well furnished by what a man says, on such or such a topic, deliberately brought before him; as by what he slides into, when the immediate subject is dismissed. If pride rankle in the bosom—if revenge be the master passion—if envy bear rule within the hidden world; or if spiritual arrogance ferments in the soul, we shall readily detect the disguised malady as often as the man makes his transition, or turns off from the subject that has engaged him.

And how, on the other hand, does the benignity—the charitable hope—the kind interpretation of what is ambiguous, break out from the casual converse of a tranquil and happy spirit! Let the sky be never so much darkened, we feel—when in such company,

that a summer's sun is somewhere above the horizon ; and ere long its brightness actually bursts out, even from the midst of gloom and thunder. Now by this very rule, and it is perhaps one of the most constant of any that may be advanced as a clew to the secrets of the human heart, we are content that the writer of the Pauline epistles should be judged, and the quality of his deepest motives, and the colour of his habitual sentiments be spoken of. We say then that the writings of Paul, abrupt and elliptical as his method often seems, are in a peculiar manner distinguished by the frequent beaming forth of hope and glory, when least one expects it.—He writes like a man who descends to his subject from a higher sphere :—as for example, when, after laying down the rule of behaviour proper to a servile condition, and insisting upon submissiveness and fidelity, he returns, as in a moment, to the very summit of joy. “ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us,” not only the virtues of common life, but that we should “ look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Almost immediately we meet with a sudden transition of another sort, indicative of the permanent humility of the writer's mind, as well as of its broad benignity and goodwill. “ Put them in mind to be subject to principalities, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers ; but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men.—For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love

of God our Saviour toward man appeared.”—This is the natural turn of a mind at once humble, pious, and benevolent.

“ This thou knowest (or, knowest thou this?) that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” But does resentment lodge in the writer’s mind ; or is the subject pursued and morosely grasped ? What meet we in the very next verse ?—“ The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus ; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day ; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”—Some universal axiom of a happy aspect is the ordinary corollary of this writer’s incidental advices :—as thus—“ Refuse profane and old wives’ fables ; and exercise thyself rather unto godliness ; for bodily exercise profiteth little ; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come We trust in the living God, WHO IS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN, specially of those that believe.” “ From men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, withdraw thyself ; BUT GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN ; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out ; having therefore food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” In several instances the most sublime of all the doxologies which the Scriptures contain are those thrown by Paul into the midst of his discussion of lower sub-

jects. Perhaps, if we were to select the passages in his epistles from which, more than from any others, the brightness of the upper world shines out, they would be those that most abruptly turn the current of his discourse. Yet what is this, if we are to rely upon the constant laws of the human mind, but proof that the happiest, and the most expansive, and the most elevated sentiments constituted the very substance of the writer's character; so that every rapid transition, and every sudden movement, is a revulsion from the sombre to the bright—from wrath to mercy—from duties to recompences;—in a word—from earth to heaven!

Christianity then, such as we find it in the Scriptures, is benign—it is from Heaven; and even had it ceased to affect mankind in the age that saw it appear, the documentary proof of its divine origin would have remained not the less complete and irresistible. In that case—convinced as we must have been that the True Light had once, though but for a moment, glanced upon the earth, we should have looked wistfully upward in hope that the great revolutions of the heavens would at length bring round a second dawn, and a lasting day!

But it is far otherwise; and in coming to the close of a course that has presented, rather the perversions than the excellences of Christianity, we should seek relief from the impression made by the continuous contemplation of a single order of objects—and those the most dire. The Gospel has had multitudes of genuine adherents—Christ a host of followers, even in the worst times; or if the first century, or the

last three of Christian history, are looked to, it would indicate a melancholy and malignant temper, to estimate at a low rate the absolute numbers of the true Church.

Yet the terrible fact which, though it be predicted by the apostles, would have astounded themselves had it stood before them in distinct perspective, remains to sadden our meditations—That an apostasy, dating its commencement from the earliest age, spread over the whole area of Christendom, affecting every article of belief, and every rule of duty ; and that it held itself entire through much more than a thousand years.

But what is our own position ? and what stage on the highway of truth has the Protestant community reached ? are the reformed churches looking back, as from an elevation, upon a dark landscape, far remote, and hardly distinguishable ? or should it not rather be confessed that our reformations, though real and immensely important, are initiative only ? This is certain that the evolutions of the Divine Providence exhibit seldom, if ever, to the eye of man any hurried transition ; but that it renovates by successive impulses, and these at distant intervals. We only follow then the established order of things when we hope that there is yet in reserve for the world the boon of an unsullied Christianity.

The sinister sense in which men of a certain party would snatch at such a supposition, and affirm that even the first articles of truth have not yet been disengaged from the general apostasy, is peremptorily excluded by the fact of the general diffusion, and devout perusal, of the Scriptures. For if, even

where universally read and piously studied, the Inspired Books fail to convey to the majority their principal meaning, it is certain that they could not be regarded as instruments of religious Instruction. If the Church has not possessed itself of the vital elements of sacred knowledge in those periods when the Scriptures have been freely perused, and piously studied, then it must be confessed that the pursuit of truth, at all, on the field of Revelation, is a desperate enterprise.

Yet this granted—an impartial survey of the religious history of mankind leads to the conclusion—and it is on the one hand a consolatory, as well as on the other an afflictive conclusion, that the possession of the vital elements of religion may consist with such perversions, both in theory and sentiment, as deprive Christianity of much of its visible beauty, and almost forbid its propagation. Most of the examples adduced in the preceding sections come under the range of this principle; and in presenting the illustrious and the mitigated instances, rather than the exaggerated, or the base, the author has held to his purpose of bringing home to every mind the conviction, that no degree of piety should be allowed to protect the system under which it appears from the severest scrutiny, or from grave suspicions.

If it be asked, on what ground any such suspicion can fairly rest, at a time when the characteristics of freedom, vigour, and activity attach to religious profession; it may at once be replied, that there must be room for serious and unsparing inquiries, as long as the actual products bear so slender a proportion to the means of general instruction—as long as

Christianity fails to affect the more energetic portion of the community—as long as zealous endeavours to propagate the faith abroad, though not unblest, are followed with scanty successes. But especially have we cause to suspect that some occult misunderstanding of the Gospel exists, while the ecclesiastical condition of the religious commonwealth is unsound.

Let it be assumed that each separate article of our creed is warranted by Scripture ; it may notwithstanding be true that indefinite misconceptions, affecting the Divine character and government, or that certain modes of feeling generated in evil days, and still uncorrected, exist, and operate to benumb the expansive energies of the Gospel. Our interpretation of Christianity may be good ; and it may be pure enough for private use ;—it may be good in the closet, and good as the source of the motives of common life ; and good as the ground of hope in death, and yet may be ill adapted to conquest and triumph. That it is so, should be assumed as the only becoming explication we can give of the general ignorance and irreligion of mankind.

THE END.

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